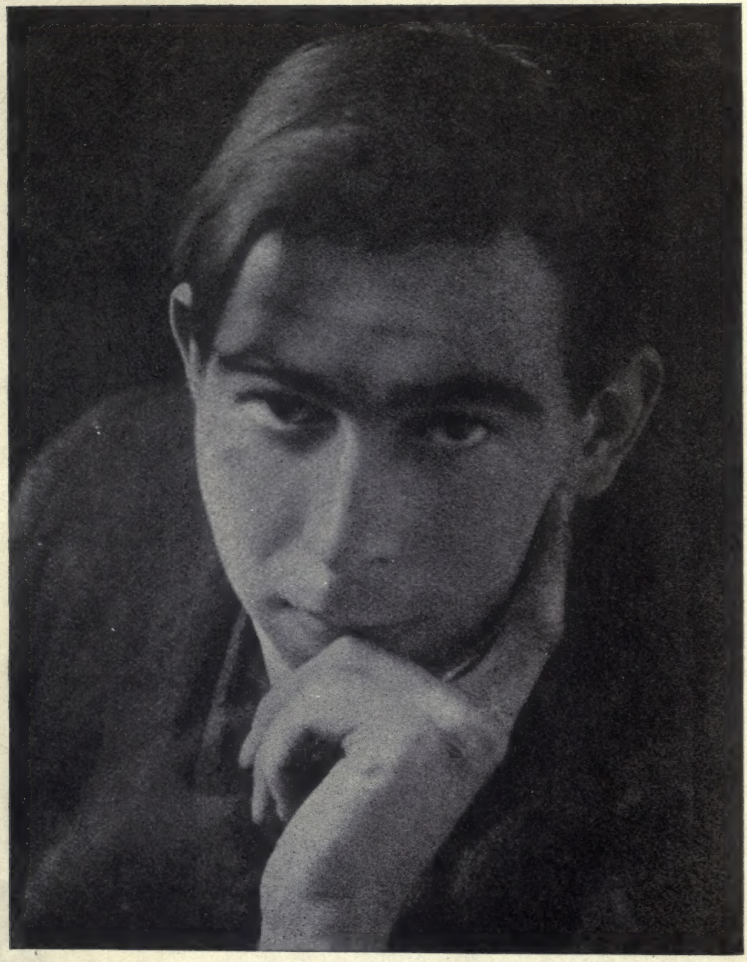
KEELING LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS



KEELING LETTERS & RECOLLECTIONS

EDITED BY E. T. :: WITH AN INTRODUCTION *by* H. G. WELLS

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TO JOAN HILLERSDON KEELING
AND BERNARD SIDNEY KEELING

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

AN apology may seem to be needed for publishing letters so intimate and personal as some of these. I can only say that I longed to preserve some record of the thought and effort which Keeling put into the conduct of life, and I am certain that it would have been his wish that his experience and even his blunders and his failures should be of use to others. My daughter's courage and her confidence in my judgment, a confidence for which I am most grateful, have enabled me to relate the circumstances of his life with a frankness which would have been impossible for anyone else.

I wish to thank his brother and those friends of his who have helped and encouraged me in the task, and especially Mr. J. C. Squire, by whom it was at first undertaken and who was obliged by pressure of work to relinquish it. To him I am indebted both for help with the letters and for permission to include several articles that appeared in the *New Statesman*. To Mrs. Green my thanks are due for much kind assistance and sympathy; to the Bishop of Southwark, Mr. Fort, and Mr. Greenwood, for their reminiscences, and above all to Mr. H. G. Wells, whose Preface gives point to the book.

While expressing my gratitude to these friends of Keeling's, I am anxious to disclaim on their behalf all responsibility with regard to the selection of letters and of passages from his journal. Any errors of taste or misrepresentations of fact to be found in the book are due entirely to me.

E. T.

PREFACE

"Ben" Keeling was a copious, egotistical, rebellious, disorderly, generous, and sympathetic young man. His egotism is the prime cause of this book; he wrote abundant letters, and they were often about himself; he talked and thought a great deal about himself, he experimented conspicuously with his life, and so he can be documented as most of his compeers in these late years of tragedy, though just as active and gallant as he, cannot be documented. It has been much more than a labour of affection and a personal memorial therefore that Mrs. Townshend has made for us in collecting and linking together the pieces of this book. She has had at her disposal as complete and expressive a specimen of the educated youth of the first decade of this century, of the generation which has borne the main brunt of this war, as perhaps we are likely to get; and she has not only paid to the memory of her friend and quasi-adopted son and son-in-law the best compliment a biographer can pay to his subject, that of being simply frank about many a matter that gentility would have veiled, but she has earned thereby the future gratitude of every serious student of this very crucial period in the history of human thought. For though every age is in its way an age of transition, this age, this red dawn of world unity, in particular is to be marked as a period of transition and conflict between two widely differing phases of human thought upon political and social questions. And Keeling was as lively and sensitive as a compass needle to every shade of conflict and transition.

He was a wild, loose thing; even bodily he was loose-limbed, and the effect of many of his discussions in this

book have about them the quality of an intellectual sprawl. He could climb and endure fatigue; he died gallantly and brilliantly bombing, but at Winchester he could learn to swim only with great difficulty. It is just that loose sprawling, with its rapid, various impacts upon ideas that were vividly new ten years ago, and that are already in the tumultuous rush of events fading out of men's memories, and upon movements and coteries and organizations that, having produced results, have vanished themselves almost as completely as Lob-lie-by-the-Fire after he has tidied up the house, which will give this book a permanent interest far beyond the thick network of personal relationships that radiate from its mentions and allusions. Ideas—movements—English mentality in the period 1904–16—and a bright-eyed, flushed, excited, gesticulating individual in the midst thereof; that is this book.

Next to the sprawl, or rather as a contributory factor to the sprawl, is Ben Keeling's unusual detachment. No father, no mother, no home, no background at all more personal than the large, promiscuous shelter of Trinity College, a young man of eighteen reputed to be of independent means, with a younger brother whom he was said to treat with edifying sternness; so he made his entry upon our stage. Even his names, it must be noted, fitted very loosely. For years I believed him to be "Ben"; at Cambridge everybody called him "Ben," and it seemed to describe him very well. Towards the end some R.F.A. men decided he was "Siberian Joe," which was still more like him—indeed, I think, the best name you could possibly imagine for him: but his proper baptismal name, "Frederic," suited him about as well as a silk hat and white linen spatterdashes would have done, and there was not a trace of "Freddiness" in him from top to toe. As for the "Hillersdon," it floats up in the formal opening of this memoir and passes immediately out of the attention of the reader, incredibly unsuitable; it is like a nervous West End wedding guest drifting into and as rapidly as possible out of a strike meeting in a back street of Leeds. But "Siberian Joe" gives you his voice, his effect of clumsy strength and energy, his little busy head that

could hold so much and worked so restlessly, his round, red, warmly flushed, rather astonished face, and his very soft and engaging brown eyes. When first I met it as the face of my host at Trinity College, this red fist of a face was bare and boyish; when I saw it last, it hailed me suddenly through a big black beard, just the beard that Keeling *would* have grown, rather an excessive, luxuriant beard. That was somewhen before the war; I think in 1914, in St. James's Park. We had a long talk then about a tremendous crisis in his affairs—there were many crises in his affairs—and as far as I could I gave him such advice as he seemed to want. The particulars of that crisis, though I know it was a very serious one, have now quite gone out of my memory. I never happened upon him again.

His personality pervades this book, and it is a curious and interesting personality; but quite apart from his personality this collection and memoir have a very great interest indeed in the picture they give of an exceedingly active and curious youth in a time of intellectual bankruptcy. It is the autobiography of a mind eager to get to the bottom of things, a personality anxious for aim and coherence, in a time when there seemed to be no direction for youth at all but the amateurish efforts of journalists and playwrights, and the queerest of self-appointed leaders and advisers; all the official and accredited priests and prophets being in effect dumb, without stimulus or grip for the mind of this younger generation. It is necessary that the reader should remember, in spite of a certain maturity of style and spirit, the boyishness of almost all these letters that follow. Keeling began by being precocious, but he continued to be immature, and he died—in an act of boyish self-forgetfulness—when he was just thirty. To its end therefore this book is the documentation of an education. Many readers will note with astonishment and dismay the names that this young man, so voracious for ideas and for direction in his life, treated with respect. Still more is it to be noted what he ignored. He took a First Class in both Part I and Part II of the History Tripos, and most of the discussion in these pages

is the interpretation of contemporary history. And it is impossible to find any sign that his two years of Cambridge historical study had given him any view of the current phase of human affairs, any vision of the process of mankind, broader or profounder than what any shop-clerk of his age might have possessed. His mind, it will be perceived, was an abundant mind, but his thought was journalistic. His ideas were not joined together; they were picked up. He emerged from the Cambridge machine a first-class product and a potential "fellow," and his mind was still untrained. For two years he must have been reading and remembering about human happenings, but there is no effect here traceable of any mental gymnastic whatever. These impressions are quick and vivid, but to the end it is the natural gifts that tell; he does not get behind his impressions to essentials with the grim steadiness one may surely demand from a highly trained man. One is left wondering if university history is indeed any sort of mental training at all, or whether it is still a mere matter of reading and anecdotage. And another thing that strikes one reader at least as extraordinary is to be found in the wildly speculative methods and the manifestly disordered nerves of Keeling in the matter of sex. He is a specimen of the completest education afforded in our time for a young man; his was the education of our social best; and yet he knew nothing in an ordered way, no ideas and experiences had been put before him, he had been given no preconception of sexual psychology at all; he had had to "find out" for himself about these matters as completely as if he had been a slum boy flung into a blind-alley occupation at the age of thirteen. Time was when education led up to initiation. Has education washed its hands of sex? Keeling fell back on plays and novels and Mr. Edward Carpenter; a majority of his contemporaries tried the music-halls and the streets; the official oracles were dumb. I do not know if that will strike the reader as being as remarkable as it does me; perhaps my ideas of what a complete education should comprehend are too extensive, but certainly it impresses me as amazing. What is a university edu-

cation supposed to give? So far as the testimony of this book goes, it would appear to give nothing but the leisure and company needed for the reading and discussion, without plan or aim, and for the most part with one's equally uninstructed contemporaries, of a miscellany of writers. And is there not something wonderful too in the spectacle of Keeling ploughing respectfully through the writings of Marx—who died quite a number of years ago? One would have supposed that Cambridge had long since dissected Marx, treated him with reagents, separated out the dead matter, exposed, displayed, analysed, and digested him. The Natural Science Tripos young men, who are curious about comparative anatomy, do not read Owen's "Anatomy" or the works of Erasmus Darwin. There is something oddly helpless about this part of the story. It is as though Keeling ranged about calling loudly for information while our "higher education" stuck in hiding.

Keeling's letters and articles upon the opening of the war and the events of his service are a valuable picture of the state of mind of the English intelligentzia of his time. I wish some of this most characteristic matter could be put before German readers to make the quality of our spirit plainer to them. And from that point onward the story is very representative indeed. It was extremely significant, and it was, I know, a common experience, that the new men should become at first enthusiastic soldiers, keen upon discipline and with an enormous respect for the Army Tradition. It is simple enough to understand. For the first time in their lives they had met direction that believed in itself. For the first time they were up against something that seemed to be Order and something that had an Aim. How gladly they gave themselves! Keeling renders that effect most illuminatingly. And quite in the vein of the general experience is the disillusionment in France. All these youngsters found themselves presently, in a magnificent army, magnificently equipped and everywhere in the ascendant—doing nothing or doing only ineffective, partial things through these precious last months of 1916, while the strength of Russia

and the possibility of complete victory wasted like sand in an hour-glass. And they knew what was happening to them. Keeling, turning to the nearest possibility, cries, "If only we had a French Staff!" . . . He died fighting bravely over some trench or other that did not matter very much, and for an advantage that belonged to no plan nor joined on to any scheme in particular. And many have died as he died. Because there was no definite scheme. Because in our schools and universities and books and newspapers and pulpits men have grown so accustomed to speak and write in undertones and with equivocations and subterfuges that the capacity to plan greatly has gone out of the country, and youth—and now a fresh generation is treading the path Ben Keeling trod—asks in vain, "What are we all doing? Where are we all going? What is the Aim of it all? What is my part? What may I do? What must I do?" The teacher, after ambiguous gestures towards Buckingham Palace and Westminster and a quotation from Mr. Asquith about not sheathing the sword, veils his face. . . .

Keeling's life was a full and vivid one, but it was largely wasted. Or if it is not to be counted as wasted it will be—if one may be paradoxical—because it is the most full, natural, artless and complete demonstration of the wastefulness of an indeterminate educational system entangled with an indeterminate political system, that it is possible to imagine. What a fund of vitality, what a power of work, what a promise of youth, fell back into darkness with this one life! And whether they dribble away ingloriously in some sort of mean peace or are snapped off and crushed suddenly in a planless war, the lives of young men must needs go on being wasted in futile quests and vain experiments, more of them and more, until a saner world learns to speak clearly to them, to prepare tolerable social and political institutions for them, to help them with its accumulated wisdom, and to ask them plainly for all that they are so eager to give and do.

H. G. WELLS.

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Photographed by V. H. Mottram, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge

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KEELING LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER I

MEMOIR[1]

FREDERIC HILLERSDON KEELING was born at Colchester on the 28th March, 1886. His father was a solicitor, but he retired early and when his only children—two sons—were born he was living a life of leisure. A Conservative in politics and a man of refinement and literary taste, he had many friends of distinction beyond the circle of his fellow-townsmen.

The Keelings lived in a comfortable suburban house, just outside Colchester. It was near the main road, modern and commonplace, but there was a large garden at the back with a bit of open woodland beyond it where the boys could enjoy a good deal of freedom. Frederic had very few pleasant recollections of his boyhood, which seems to have been a time of constant friction and revolt, but he used to talk affectionately of the garden and of the gardener, whom he regarded as a lifelong friend, and of the old walnut-tree which he used to climb for " the best walnuts in the world."

His childhood was not a happy one. Fate made a strange blunder when she placed that frank, generous, turbulent creature, full of fierce energy, in a decorous middle-class home where all the conventions of Victorian propriety were rigidly observed. Sunday after Sunday he would follow

[1] Part of this Memoir, from p. 14 to p. 21, is written by a friend to whom F. H. K. was much attached.

his mother into the family pew with a glowering countenance, not unobserved by the neighbours, betraying a submission that was not only unwilling but scornful. A mind so active and a temper so generous and so subversive needed no outside influence to make it rebel. Socialism came to him by instinct as a hatred of smug comfort, founded on class distinctions, the sort of comfort that depends on a well-drilled staff of servants in an underground kitchen and a padded carriage with a fat coachman on the box.

He grew up strangely out of sympathy with his family, and often in after life alluded to his loneliness as a boy both at home and at school.

Of his father he always spoke with respect and affection, but Mr. Keeling was already an old man of feeble health when Frederic first remembered him. They cannot have had much in common except perhaps a taste for archæology, which seems to have developed very early in the boy, for there is a MS. book, dating from his eleventh year and carefully preserved by his father, which contains a solemn treatise "On Prehistoric Man," together with various notes and a few poems on the antiquities of Colchester.[1]

Frederic and Guy were the children of Mr. Keeling's third wife, whom he married when he was sixty and she twenty-five, his earlier marriages having been childless. He died when Frederic was fourteen, and Mrs. Keeling, whose health had suffered much during her husband's long illness, survived him only three years.

The boys, left orphans when the elder was only seventeen, were singularly free from ties of home or kin, a circumstance that left its traces. At the time of their mother's death they were both at Winchester, but Frederic left school the same year. He had worked hard there and had taken a good place in the Sixth. He was not popular and disliked games, but he made his mark in the school. He thought for himself, was already a Socialist and by no means timid in making his views known and felt.

The following notes, kindly contributed by the late Head

[1] Guy tells me that his brother wrote letters to the local papers when he was eleven, but I have failed to discover what they dealt with.—E. T.

Master of Winchester and by Frederic's House Master, are very interesting to those who knew and loved him in later years. They throw light on that sense of isolation at school of which he retained such a vivid and probably exaggerated recollection, and at the same time they prove that to the observing eye his sterling qualities of mind and character were already apparent. Many of his most marked characteristics in after life are to be found in the picture —a profound respect for what he considered rightful authority and an enthusiasm for organization, combined strangely with a rebellious temperament and a fierce hatred of compromise and conventionality.

REMINISCENCES OF F. H. K. AT SCHOOL.

I. By Dr. Burge, Bishop of Southwark, formerly Head Master of Winchester.

I value very greatly the opportunity of writing some few impressions of Fred Keeling as I knew him and watched his development at school. But it is very difficult to do this without exaggerating the difficulties with which a nature like his had to contend and those with which we had to contend in helping and not hurting it. It is a mistake to dwell too much on words like "unpopularity," "resentment against Public School conventions," "against the tyranny of Winchester notions," and the like, a mistake because it would give the impression of an intractable, self-centred prig. There was nothing of that in Fred; with him the question of popular or unpopular was never raised; with him school conventions never seemed to count. His was a perfectly natural, fearless instinct for what was true and right and straightforward and just. But he was also vehement and emphatic, and it is easy enough to imagine that such a spirit forms very decided opinions with a very insufficient supply of knowledge and experience. Yet he was not intractable: he was always ready to learn, to be informed; indeed, his desire to accumulate information was insatiable and needed some careful adjustment. It was, rather, a somewhat remarkable instance of a mind reaching the stage of independent

inquiry and impatience of authoritative opinion at an unusually early age. Many more such instances would be found, I expect, among boys who go out into the world earlier than our Public School boys.

But there was something much more substantial than all that in Fred's development and character. He was an indefatigable worker. He used to come to me for a list of books to read on some subject he was exploring. It would have been quite fatal to reel off a list: he would have set himself to devour the whole of it without delay, would have suffered from violent indigestion and have proved a most difficult patient to pacify. But he was perfectly ready to work under some direction, and there would never be a doubt of the thoroughness and strength that were put into the work.

I like to recall one way in which this spirit of thoroughness grew with his growth. He developed very early a keen interest in social and political questions. Of course he flew to extremes. That is the privilege of youth with its glorious emphasis. Yet he soon began to discover that to form sound opinions on political and social questions there must be some considerable knowledge of facts; so he set himself to master the history of his country; then he found it impossible to do that without understanding the history of other countries. For the study of history, he found he must possess or train a good memory; I do not think he had naturally a retentive memory, but he deliberately set himself to train it. This represents not unfairly the stage of intellectual power he had reached when he left school: no real literary instinct or interest in literature as such, but a considerable, thorough knowledge of history, which was much more than a mere storing of facts, because of his living interest in politics and social questions and his deep sense of duty to understand them. Then his success in winning a scholarship at Trinity, Cambridge, his visit to Germany, and his natural development brought out the ambition, always present, to go deeper, to study first principles and the reasons of things. So it became his desire, as he often used to say to me, to get on to the Moral Science Tripos.

Through all this there runs, what was most typical of Fred's nature, an inflexible sense of duty. This came out very strongly when I was first brought into intimate relations with him during his preparation for Confirmation. After much talk and searchings of heart, he decided to postpone the rite and he was confirmed a year later. The same characteristic became, of course, more clearly marked as his position in the school gave him greater responsibility.

As time went on and his character took more definite shape, he became more aware of his limitations and was more and more generous in his judgments upon others without abating one jot of his own decision. He gradually came to be better understood: without any question he won the respect and confidence of his fellow-prefects and worked well with them.

I have turned back to the pages of the book in which the prefects that I made inscribed their names. Of those who signed with Fred in the autumn of 1902 one-third have given themselves, as he gave himself, to the one cause that claimed and united them, and all the rest save two, who died earlier, are serving in the forces—just as really he was one with them in the spirit of loyalty and service at school.

Was Fred happy at school? I do not believe the question would have conveyed much meaning to him. Life to him never seemed to be a question of happiness or unhappiness, unless he interpreted it in the light of St. James's definition: "Happy is the man that can stand the ordeal of living, for, tested and found to ring true, he shall receive the crown of life, a character of true manhood." Life and duty and work were to him grim and solemn things because he was unusually and deeply sensitive to the inequalities and shams and shames which disfigure human society, and with such enemies he could never make peace.

I was greatly attached to him: I valued his friendship and his confidences: his death is a grievous loss of fine ability and noble qualities to the cause of social regeneration, which he had so much at heart.

II.—By Mr. Fort, House Master at Winchester College, 1899–1911.

F. H. Keeling was intellectually the most honest and sincere of all boys whom I have ever known, and he was one of the most persistent. Public School life did not come easily to him, for he was not anything of an athlete, he was a slow and laborious worker in all classical subjects, he was outspoken as to all his opinions, and he did not know the meaning of the word "compromise." At first he was not popular in the House, chiefly because of the last two characteristics, because in spite of his persistence he could never "pass" in swimming, because he insisted on working as many hours a day as he chose and then would not hand on the translation of a passage which he had mastered by his own hard work. It happened that, though it was before the days of the O.T.C., the leaders in the House were eager to have as many members of the House as possible in the Winchester College Volunteer Corps, and Keeling refused to join the Corps for two terms in which he was the only boy in the House in that position.

Perhaps I was his best friend at Winchester in those early days, though later on Dr. Burge understood his work as well as I did. I remember two characteristic incidents of his third year in the school: one that he refused on conscientious grounds to be confirmed, though he was satisfied on the point in the next year; and the other that on one occasion he formed a combination of boys, who were not prefects, in order to put a stop to certain practices which needed stopping.

After his first two years at Winchester his position altered greatly, as his remarkable capacity for the study of history told more and more, and most boys began to understand him, while all respected him; my difficulties then were rather to extract him from troublesome situations with masters. In one case he considered that a master had distrusted him; in another he found himself punished with a whole division, when he himself was not in fault; on that occasion he had committed a flagrant act of disobedience and, when brought to account for it, said, "I acted as I did, sir, because the

punishment was unjust." The master, who behaved with great consideration, gave him only a small penalty in writing, but, knowing Keeling's nature, locked him into the room to do it. He finished the task and escaped by a most difficult route through the window. At that point he brought the case to me; I urged him to apologize, and he flatly refused to do so. Finally I induced him to go to the master, before he was summoned, and say, "I hope there was no harm, sir, in my leaving the room yesterday when I had finished my imposition"; and the situation was saved.

His physical appearance was most deceptive, for he had an immense memory together with a very small head, and enormous resolution in spite of a retreating chin. He was a great upholder of order, though he accepted no rule without an examination of its meaning and purpose, and had a great sense of responsibility towards the community, especially towards the weaker members of it—he was exceedingly wise and kind in his dealings with his younger brother. He held opinions on all sorts of problems, which generally present themselves only in University days, and though his opinions changed or rather developed very rapidly, I never knew him hold an opinion except as the result of considerable thought; while he was always prepared to carry out in practice all that his opinions logically demanded of him. He was a most interesting boy, though many would have considered him an odd one. Thus on one occasion, when I found him in bed with influenza, and said something enthusiastic about what women do for men, this strange head on the pillow replied, "Well, they're paid for it"; and on two occasions, though he was ordinarily a pattern of respectability and orderliness, he just went mad—one was 5th November and the other Mafeking Day.

When he became head of the House, he was invaluable to me and his influence was of the very highest value to Winchester; many changes were needed in a House which had, owing to special circumstances, lived a very isolated life for thirty years, and Keeling carried them through with great wisdom and energy, being far more face to face with the difficulties and with the incon-

veniences of the position than I was. I always considered that the later prosperity of B House was mainly due to what we planned and he executed in 1903–4.

In his last term of all he determined to attempt what he knew would involve him in great unpopularity, viz. putting an end to the use of "Englishes" throughout the school; he induced the other prefects to join him in collecting all "Englishes" in B House and then took the matter up to the Head Master.

I have never met any one who seemed to strive more earnestly to find out the truth or to follow more uncompromisingly the truth as he saw it.

In October, 1904, he entered Trinity as a Major scholar. He always loved Cambridge, and used to contrast his four happy years there with his uncongenial life at school. The change was indeed enormous; he found himself surrounded for the first time by kindred spirits and free to plunge into a stream of just the kind of activity that he loved. His revolutionary views, instead of being a barrier that shut him out from fellowship with his neighbours, became all at once a bond of union, and he was soon the centre of a band of enterprising spirits whose companionship gave him the first great happiness of his life.

In default of letters written at this period, I will quote from an account of the rebirth of the Cambridge University Fabian Society which he wrote in 1913.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY FABIAN SOCIETY.[1]

PART I. 1904–8.

BY F. H. K.

When I went up in October, 1904, I was already a member of the parent Society, and had been a Socialist for some years. Pease gave me an introduction to the secretary of the town Fabian Society of that day, which had a nominal membership of six. I attended the last meeting of that

[1] *Cambridge University Magazine*, October, 1913.

body in October, 1904, along with another freshman, W. T. Layton, whom I persuaded to come with me, although he protested his fidelity to sound economic truth. The meeting was not enlivening. The five persons who were present (including Layton and myself) sat on disused grocery cases in an attic above a milk shop in Bridge Street. I remember that one of the members smoked a pipe which did not turn up into a bowl at the end, but opened out like a sort of megaphone and exuded a steady dribble of tobacco ash over its owner's trousers. I wondered if that was a specifically Fabian pipe.

The only other Fabian undergraduate in the University was Pearsall, whose family is of Garden City fame. I called on him and found him willing to help in starting a Society if any other members could be obtained. But the only piece of propaganda which I was able to achieve during the year consisted of a speech in favour of the Labour Party at the Union. (That was before the 1906 election, and was generally considered outrageous.)

The real father of the C.U.F.S. is " Dicky " Coit, who came up to King's in 1905, and is eminently suited by reason of his benign character for parentage of every kind. I had never seen or heard of him till he came to call on me in the Lent term of 1906, to ask me to help him to get up a Fabian meeting to be addressed by Dr. Haden Guest. Amber Reeves (now Mrs. G. R. Blanco-White) arranged with Coit to bring a number of Newnhamites. I shall never forget that meeting in the Chetwynd Lecture Room. There was a pretty good audience. I was so obsessed with anxiety about the best way of approaching the strangers present for the purpose of forming a Society that I could never remember subsequently a single thing that Dr. Guest said. However, a small group of people stopped afterwards and agreed to form a Society, of which J. C. Squire was appointed secretary.

The relative novelty of the Socialist movement in 1906 and 1907 made the whole position in Cambridge rather different from what I imagine it at the present moment. I daresay in most ways it made propaganda easier. We certainly did make Socialists of some people who might not

otherwise have found their way in that direction. The most prominent London Fabians were generous in helping us. During the last two and a half years of my connection with the Society Webb, and Mrs. Webb, Shaw, Wells, Granville Barker, Olivier, Pease, Keir Hardie, Pete Curran, and Dr. Südekum (of the Reichstag) all addressed meetings for us. Jovial feasts, attended by any number up to thirty people, and subsequent "squashes," became a feature of the evenings when there were meetings. The joint meetings with Oxford Fabians were also good fun.

The four most important affairs in the history of the Society in my day were the Feminist Question, the Constitutional Question, the Keir Hardie meeting, and the first attempt to strengthen the Labour movement in the town. We were the first Society in the University—with the possible exception of a couple of science clubs—to admit women as members. We were all keen Feminists. I would not go the length of allowing myself to be persuaded by a lady, who shall be nameless, to obtain tickets under false pretences for a Liberal meeting to be addressed by Haldane, in order to enable Mrs. Drummond and her friends to break it up. But I did stand on a barrow outside the Guildhall and assist Mrs. Drummond to hold a meeting in the rain.

After the presidency of V. H. Mottram we decided to elect a woman as president, to assert the principles of female equality as aggressively as possible. Two Newnhamites were nominated in order that we might have the fun of an election. When they were ordered to stand down by their college authorities, Edith Moggridge, of Girton, was surreptitiously communicated with, put up, and elected. But she was never allowed by *her* college authorities to take the chair at a meeting. The position was therefore left vacant for a term by way of protest, and ever since the Society has had a woman treasurer, Mrs. Blanco-White being the first. (Some of them *have* kept accounts, which was more than one of the two male treasurers did.) No doubt it was all very childish. But Cambridge and life generally have been very different experiences for me owing to the fact that women were

admitted to the C.U.F.S. I only hope that others feel that it was a small shove worth making, and, above all, that the lady who from that day to this has shepherded the Newnham flock in and out of meetings, who alone knows the whole history of the C.U.F.S., and who has lived through the preaching of Socialism to three generations of undergraduates, does not always regret the job she undertook.

The true history of the Keir Hardie meeting is this. We took the Guildhall for the meeting in conjunction with a small *ad hoc* committee of trade unionists and I.L.P.-ers. My bed-maker, who was, and is, one of the greatest women on God's earth, told me a few days before the meeting that a gang of miserable rowing men had concocted a plot in the rooms at the bottom of my staircase to screw up Keir Hardie in my rooms while we had dinner. We therefore ordered a dinner ostentatiously for Keir Hardie at the college kitchens, and talked everywhere of his coming (by a wrong train), meanwhile secretly arranging that he should be met and taken to King's. On the afternoon of the meeting Mottram went to a theatrical costumier's and was made up as Keir Hardie—hat, grey beard and hair (alas! Tram's hair is naturally grey now), red tie, etc. I drove up with him in a hansom to the Great Gate, and was met by a number of Fabians, who shook hands with the great man. We made our way across the court amidst howls of a few hundred rowing men from various colleges and our other normal enemies. I then bolted to the Guildhall, where we had got a hundred trade unionists to help us to hold the platform against the mob of undergraduates. Meanwhile Mottram, Hubback, and Gomme kept up the fiction of a great feast in my rooms. The doors were screwed up, and a few hundred undergraduates howled with joy in the court. At about eight o'clock Hubback let down a mountaineering rope into Trinity Lane (the rooms were on the second floor), and they all went down it, leaving the lights on. It took the mob about a quarter of an hour to discover what had happened. Then they climbed on the roof, broke the windows, and departed. Meanwhile the Guildhall was being wrecked. A few score

benches and some windows were broken (the damage cost us altogether £40), and there were the usual accompaniments of eggs and other missiles. We kept the mob back by drawing benches across the gangway, and Keir Hardie was eventually smuggled into King's. The mob only smashed a cab in which he was supposed to be. Three weeks later all the Trinity rowing men marched round the Great Court for an evening to the tune of "We'll Wash Ben Keeling." We were again forewarned, and covered the staircase with margarine, protected the doors and windows by barbed wire, which could be electrified by pressing a button, and laid in a fine stock of coal and water. But the mob was not drunk enough to attack the Dean and four porters who walked up and down at the bottom of the staircase all the evening, though we thirsted for battle.

. . . . .

As to our effort on behalf of the I.L.P. with good old Secretary Comrade Pindar, and the development of the Keir Hardie Meeting Trade Unionist Committee into a Labour Representation Committee, we did our best, but have been so far outshone by later generations that there is no need to talk of it. It was hard work to keep that L.R.C. going. Still, I am glad we did, if only for the good friends I made there.

Hugh Dalton abandoned Tariff Reform for Fabianism in the second year of the Society's existence, became its secretary, and succeeded me as president when I went down in 1908.

Writing this has made me feel for the first time in my life a wish that I could live again through all the crudities of those Cambridge undergraduate days. I will blush for nothing. It was a past worth living in—not merely to be lived through. If a Fabian friend or enemy of those days—man or woman—sees this, let him know that in my soul I have this moment drained yet another quart to him from the big blue mug. We were at least fools or quarrelsome together—if he will have it so. *Prosit!* The Cause!

The following extracts from letters to his brother, written in the autumn term of 1906, carry on the story of Fabian activities.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
Autumn, 1906.

We (the C.U. Fabian Society) had a public meeting in sympathy with the Russian Revolution the other day. About 170 persons were present. I was in the chair, supported by Madame Kropotkin (the wife of the great anarchist), an ex-president of the C.U. Liberal Club, the new Secretary of the Union who beat me in the recent election and who is a great Tory Democrat, and the girl who is the most prominent Newnham member of our Society. We passed a resolution which is to be sent to the leader of the Labour Party in the late Duma and to several democratic papers in Petersburg—if there are any left which have not yet been suppressed by that bloody Russian Government. . . .

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
November, 1906.

Sorry I have not written for so long. I am awfully busy till the end of next week. I shall probably go off to Vienna about the middle of December. I will certainly come down to Copthill for a day or so just before I go, and shall call at home for a similar period on my return here. I go up to Liverpool next Friday.

Am proposing a motion condemning the present Government. I shall attack them for playing the fool with education, and making asses of themselves over Trades Disputes Bill, also for messing about Plural Voting when they should be giving Woman Suffrage, Unemployed Act and Feeding of School Children. Mrs. Philip Snowden was down here yesterday speaking for the Fabian Society on the Woman question. Forty-eight people were present at the meeting in my rooms. I gave a Socialist dinner to six men, Mrs. Snowden, and one Newnham girl afterwards, not an oligarchal complicated feed, but beef, beer, rice, and cheese. (Of course there was wine for the ladies, who can't

be expected to take beer.) . . . The Fabian Society now numbers sixty. There was an account of our last meeting in to-day's *Tribune*.

December, 1906.

. . . I had a very good time at Liverpool. Since then I have been defeated by 13 votes, 157 to 144, at my last shot for office at the Union. It was rather rot to come so near and to lose. But of course a man who takes up an attitude like mine does not expect to receive conventional honours. The retiring President told me that I should probably have got in had I not made a somewhat outspoken attack on the "sport" of the King and aristocracy just before the election. He and all the other officers were strongly in favour of my candidature, though none of them agreed with my views.

I have been very busy with Socialist politics lately. A lot of Cambridge Socialists, including two girls, went up to town last Friday to take part in a meeting of the London Fabian Society, where H. G. Wells was advocating that middle and upper class Socialists should throw in their lot with the Labour Party. I am all for this policy. . . .

The following letter from Vienna is characteristic of him in several ways :—

VIENNA. *December*, 1906.

I said I could not think of anything I wanted for Christmas, but I should like to revoke that remark and should be humbly grateful if you would send me a book by Bernard Shaw called "The Perfect Wagnerite." I shall be going to a lot of operas during my stay here, and I want to get to know something about musical criticism. I went to the opera last night with an American and a Polish girl and enjoyed it hugely. It is still snowing here. The streets are magnificent at night with the lamps shining over the snow. . . .

In spite of some appearances to the contrary, "Ben" Keeling had a genuine belief in Art. He hated anything which he suspected of dilettantism or sentimentality, and

he sometimes humorously exaggerated this antipathy for the benefit of his artistic friends. They knew to take it in good part, and to accept the label " bloody æsthete " as a mark of gruff appreciation. He measured art by life, and disliked the purely imaginative. Once when he and a well-intentioned but very uninstructed fellow-Fabian were passing along the cloisters of Neville's Court on their way back from a meeting, they paused to look out through the screen at the wonderfully still, unearthly splendour of the frosted moonlit " Backs," and Keeling burst out into an exclamation of delight. " Yes," said the other man, who had spent the preceding hour or so in hopeless attempts to follow a discussion far beyond him, and was now much relieved to get back to something that seemed common ground—" yes, this is what *I* like—dreams." Keeling was offended instantly. " I don't," he said, and turning on his heel, made off.

He valued art for the ideas in it, and any branch of it that he approached was always tackled as a study, conscientiously and with an effort of the brain. This does not mean that it was not enjoyed ; indeed, for anyone with Keeling's " jovial " vein, that could hardly have been possible. On his return to Cambridge in the Lent Term of 1907, he spoke with great enthusiasm of the music he had heard. Wagner he thought glorious, and gave a glowing description of the broad, rich, flooding river-music in the overture to " Rheingold."

It was characteristic of him that his favourite play of Shakespeare was " The Tempest," because it was the most philosophical.

With this continental tour is to be connected a story which he often told against himself with full appreciation of the point. One of the best things about him in his undergraduate days was the spontaneous freshness and *camaraderie* of his relations with his numerous women friends, at an age when many men have not quite rid themselves of all the awkwardness of boyhood. He was not merely frank but kind, would go long walks and talk with them of their careers or intellectual ambitions, and that not with attention only, but with help. His manner was

every bit as natural with women as with men, and even his vocabulary was only a very little different. The last evening of this holiday he had been having supper with two ladies whom he had met abroad and liked; pressed for time, but ravenous, he descended on a piece of bread which happened to have been left half-eaten by his neighbour. She said so, and began to cut another for him. "Boh!" roared Ben scornfully, "*I* don't mind *your bite!*" The ladies looked at one another, and then broke into peals of delighted laughter. Keeling, however, was not aware of having made a joke, and at once demanded (his mouth full of bread) what the devil they were grinning at. "Oh, Mr. Keeling!" cried one of them, "that's the nearest yet we've ever heard you come to paying a compliment!" Whereupon Keeling gradually began to laugh.

Laughter—real high-spirited, elemental, joyous laughter—was seldom very far from Keeling in those days. In his ideals, certainly, he was most desperately serious; serious in his aims and studies, serious in his attitude to human life in general; even liable at intervals to intense depression; but for all that, he could laugh. Often enough it would begin involuntarily; in the midst of the most earnest colloquy on the nature of the universe a remark of somebody's would strike his sense of humour, and he would give vent to one or two reluctant hoarse guffaws, then all at once would roar aloud with boisterous amusement.

There can hardly have been many other men who have become equally notorious in their University so soon. Even a rowing or a football Blue is not quite known by name to everybody; but in 1907 every undergraduate had heard of Keeling, and even a good many Dons. By those who knew no more about him than his name (which stood of course for Socialism) he was naturally for the most part execrated; but there may have been some small proportion even of these who did at least admire his obvious courage. At any rate, one night when some half-dozen friends of his were in his rooms, and beer and whisky were being circulated along with such philosophizing as may best accompany them, several half-drunk undergraduates in the court below suddenly interrupted these proceedings with an abusive

serenade. A council of war being held, and an attack in force decided on, all sallied forth with pokers, tongs, and soda-syphons; but the enemy behaved most handsomely, apologized, and to the surprise of all, sang Keeling's praises. "We don't want to fight with you, you're a damned fine fellow even though you *are* a Socialist; we know quite well you've got a lot of pluck"—or sounds to that effect. Ben was strangely moved by this quite unexpected tribute from total strangers only a little more intoxicated than himself; he stood there guffawing awkwardly, until, overcome with modesty, he retreated up the staircase, and was then left in peace.

The first trait in Keeling's character to strike any one who had just met him was almost always his amazing energy. He loved to walk and talk with other men, and did both together at a tremendous pace. Like Socrates, he cared mainly for the argument, with the result that, unlike almost all other voluble conversers, he was a ready and attentive listener. The potations of that Greek philosopher (limited to convivial occasions) did not impair his health or his intelligence, and here also the resemblance holds. Though not of powerful build (the muscles of his arms at least were under average, by his own account), he liked physical exertion, disdained porterage of all kinds, and fairly revelled in a swim. Few people ever saw him tired, and certainly no one ever saw him slack. He could sit up to all hours. In studying, he worked not so much hard perhaps as fiercely; one Cambridge friend's experience is significant: "He gave me the use of his own room to work in these two days, but I could not read a sentence; not that he interrupted much; he worked—or seemed to do so—a good deal; but the presence of his restless personality was a thing I simply could not once forget." He believed in being "elemental," by which he generally meant, living the simple life and living it uproariously. A Trinity man of detached outlook once gave something like the following account of a sleeping party he had come across on Keeling's roof. "B—— is elemental, but not democratic, so he sleeps beneath the stars, but with a mattress and luxurious rugs; Keeling is democratic and

elemental too, so he has only a rough blanket; X—— is democratic but not elemental, so he sleeps on the floor of Keeling's room."

Ben's most delightful quality in those days was, perhaps, his untiring hospitality. His rooms[1] were the great meeting-place for everybody who had at the same time liberal ideals and was intellectually keen. There they might drink and smoke at almost any time, and discuss the universe *ad libitum*. As but one instance of the way in which he broadened other men's experiences, reference may be made to the case of a certain youth of eager intellectual outlook who was very poor and had led the narrowest life imaginable in the most drab environment. This man met at various times in Keeling's rooms Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Granville Barker, Lillah Macarthy, Sidney Webb, several leading members of the Fabian Society, and many of the most interesting undergraduates of the day, including E. S. Montagu and Rupert Brooke. All visitors who came to lecture to the C.U.F.S. were entertained to dinner in the delightful low-roofed sitting-room, with its fine old beams, its wonderful great colour-print just visible on the shadowed wall, and its inviting dark-stained wooden settle glowing pleasantly before a copious fire. The well-laid table with its artistic beer-mugs, the kindly smile of Mrs. Coxall, the pervading atmosphere of intellectual keenness and irrepressible high spirits, and most of all the boundless heartiness of Ben himself, combined to give these banquets an exhilaration all their own.

No account of Keeling's Cambridge life could be complete without some mention of the wonderful relation that existed between him and his bed-maker. Mrs Coxall was one of his best friends. He chaffed her, shouted for her, argued with her, lent her books, respected her enormously, confided in her; she in her turn was something of a mother to him.

Many undergraduates have been better off for private means—though Keeling had enough to give free scope to all his interests and activities—but few can have been more generous with what they had. Among other things, he

[1] In staircase "O," Great Court; but since the reconstructions of 1910 these rooms are entered from staircase "P."

offered to finance a friend of his during a whole fourth year at Cambridge, the friend's father having been prevented by financial losses from continuing his education, and Keeling was genuinely disappointed when the offer was refused.

The " Fish and Chimney " was flourishing about this time. It was a club of some dozen members, mostly from St. John's and Trinity, who met at varying intervals to read old or modern plays ; in the Michaelmas Term of 1906 it was meeting regularly once a week. Keeling enjoyed these functions hugely ; he read distinctly, humorously, and with spirit. In distributing the parts before a reading of " Macbeth," the secretary at once assigned to him the part of Duncan, for no better reason than the early occurrence in it of his favourite expletive—a democratic one. " What bloody man is that ? " demanded Ben with gusto ; and the postman, who happened to have entered just before, was astonished beyond measure.

Another member of this Club, and a very valued friend of Keeling's Cambridge days, was F. W. Hubback, also of Trinity, who died of wounds in France on 12 February, 1917.

In December, 1907, he went, on the recommendation of a Scottish friend, to Arran for a holiday. He stayed at Rose Villa, Cordon, near Lamlash, and among other things climbed Goat Fell. He was very fond of mountaineering always—not, like some less truly " elemental " people, *only* when it happened to be dangerous.

To J. C. Squire.

ARRAN. 28 *December*, 1907.

A glorious place, on a large bay with a mountainous island in the middle. It is not very cold. I have bathed three times since I have been here. It is my first visit to Scotland. I spent a day in Glasgow, which is a pretty filthy place. There are, however some glorious Italian and Dutch pictures in the Gallery, though it would be improved if about three-quarters of the things in it were burnt.

We got lost on the hills the other night and had to crawl down a long glen in the darkness, feeling every step. We

discovered afterwards that at one point we had been sitting on the edge of a 50-feet waterfall. . . .

I am going up to Cambridge early this term. I have resolutely refused all political speaking for the next year and am going to grind hard till the end of March. . . . I expect I shall spend next year in town taking bar exams., and doing historical research. . . . Have just finished an awfully interesting little book by Webb on London Education. It really gives one a very good idea of the enormous amount of educational machinery at work of which I at least was almost entirely ignorant. The Polytechnics are apparently wonderful educational forces. Do you remember John Tanner and 'Enery Straker's conversation on the Polytechnics in " Man and Superman " ?

I have also been reading Edward Carpenter's books a good lot lately. " Love's Coming of Age " is the best book on the sex question that I know of.

I wrote a review of an American book on the decline of the birth-rate the other day. It should be in the next *Fabian News*. I have been asked to draft a tract on Socialism and the Universities. It was with that in my mind that I read Webb's book on London Education. . . .

It was at a meeting of the C.U.F.S. on 20 February, 1908, that Keeling caused a small sensation among the Newnham and Girton contingent by exclaiming, " I hate to see a woman with a dead cat round her neck ! " which was his way of stating that he disapproved of furs. He had a fierce hatred of cruelty, whether vindictive or cold-blooded ; and he once said that the first passion he could remember feeling was an outburst of violent indignation at the sight of what he thought was unjust chastisement administered to a child.

Towards the end of the following term, on June 7th, Keeling delivered a farewell address to the Society. It was entitled " Apologia Proletarii "—i.e. the proletarian's vindication of his cause ; but it dealt with many things. Ben wanted to be very clear, and so resolved to write his lecture out ; but these final days were " jovial " ones, and when the

appointed date arrived he found he could not get it finished. He decided to read as much as he had written and then to improvise the rest. There is at least one friend of his who still remembers the strangest passage in that really remarkable discourse. This passage was part read, part spoken; the transition was in the middle of a clause; and the length, the involution, the redundancy, the incoherence, and complete obscurity of the sentence in which Keeling apologized for that transition, on the ground of his being so much better qualified to speak than write, were quite incredible. The fact is, what he had written had been written well. His speaking, then as often in his early days, was spoiled by almost feverish over-emphasis.

Some days afterwards Keeling "went down." He had taken a First Class in the First Part of the History Tripos in 1906, and a First Class in the Second Part in 1907, when he became B.A. In 1907–8 he studied Economics, attending the lectures of Prof. Marshall. In the meantime, more people of an intellectual temper had passed through his rooms than through those of any other undergraduate of his day. Of the friends he made in those four years, some often saw him afterwards and some did not. But all alike remembered him; they could not help it.

CHAPTER II

CAMBRIDGE AND LLANBEDR

1908 (AGED 22)

It was in June, 1907, that I first saw Frederic Keeling at one of Mrs. Webb's receptions. The rooms were crowded, but this lanky youth, with big brown eyes and ineffective chin, caught my attention more than once. He seemed oddly inappropriate in those surroundings, eager and rather scornful, as if he were looking for something that was not there. No one could tell me his name, and I did not learn it till a month or two later, at the Fabian Summer School, where I happened to be in charge when he and a Cambridge friend arrived, and to receive them when they rode up on their bicycles. It was the first year of the Fabian Summer School, which found its home in those days in a romantic spot in North Wales. The party was neither large nor formal, and "Ben," as he was called at Cambridge, soon became the centre of it. He lectured on Economic History, led mountain expeditions, and joined vehemently in every sort of discussion.

Though at this time a blundering, headstrong creature, he was nevertheless attractive, absurdly egotistical, and yet full of public spirit and ready for any self-sacrifice if he could see that it was for the common good. He had, too, an engaging way of treating his elders as if they were equals. The deference due to age is so often a dissociating barrier that elderly people are sometimes very willing to forgo it, especially when, as in Ben's case, one could be sure of frank, friendly sympathy instead.

During these few weeks in Wales he and I got to know one another pretty well, and he began to form a habit, which lasted for many years, of telling me what he was doing and thinking. After we left Llanbedr, however, there was a break in our intercourse. He returned to Cambridge and I heard but little of him. It was not until Easter of 1908 that we met again. He had been going through an emotional crisis which he took very much to heart, and was badly in need of advice and consolation. He was staying at a cottage in the New Forest, whither he withdrew from his cheerful circle at Cambridge when he felt the need of thinking things out alone.

He was at this time deep in the history of the South African colonies, with a view to a thesis for a Trinity Fellowship, and was projecting a visit to South Africa. He was also reading Marx, as will appear from his letters. It was characteristic of him that the work he happened to be doing filled the horizon and overflowed constantly into his conversation.

He had begun to read for the Bar and was coming up from time to time to eat his Bar dinners. During these visits he got into touch with the London Fabian Society and saw a good deal of some of its members.

To J. C. Squire.

LYNDHURST, HANTS.
22 *April*, 1908.

. . . Cambridge Socialism is really doing pretty well on the whole. The most important thing in the Society is the excellent nucleus we have got of first- and second-year King's men. Dalton (second year) and Brooke [1] (second year) are splendid men. Dalton will probably—certainly—be president next year. Brooke is a poet and classical scholar. He is just going to become a full member. Then there are two first-year classical scholars, S., who will probably be secretary, and Z., a mystical Jew. Then of course there is Selwyn.[2] I think we shall keep him, though his politics are rather erratic. He comes into contact with Father Bull and other leading Christian Socialists. The only danger is that King's will rather monopolize the show. There is no longer a strong Trinity Socialist set, I regret to say.

. . . I am rather wishing I had not stood for the Fabian Executive now. I am pretty sure to come out bottom. Had the election come in term time I might have done better, as I expect both Cambridge and Oxford friends would have canvassed and given instructions in the mystical efficiency of the plumping vote. (I can't be accused of canvassing *you* now as the poll will be closed in a few hours.) . . . My brother is going up to Cambridge next year. I think he will be a Socialist all right. . . .

[1] Rupert Brooke.
[2] Rev. E. G. Selwyn, now Head Master of Bradfield.

To Mrs. Townshend.

THE UNION SOCIETY, CAMBRIDGE.
11 *June*, 1908.

It seems a long time since I saw you last. I have been doing a vast number of different things of varying degrees of futility. I did not come to stay with you when I ate my remaining Bar dinners for the term as I felt it my duty to go and see how Guy was getting on.

Ten days ago I went to fulfil an old engagement to spend a week-end with L. at his country cottage. It really was an experience worth having. I am usually too obsessed with problems relating either to myself or to humanity at large to give myself up in sheer "abandon" to the pleasure of the moment. However, I managed to catch on to the atmosphere there—and I don't think I have ever had such a debauch of pleasurable idleness for a couple of days in my life. I have a great liking for L. I have little or no artistic taste myself, but I love the company of artists of nearly every kind.

. . . . .

Well, it was all very delightful, and I feel the better for it and very strongly inclined to "ask for more."

I was quite miserable for a couple of days after returning to Cambridge. However, I had that agitation against the Hall on my hands and many other things to help diminish the force of the images of those idyllic moments.

Last Monday I delivered an address to the Fabians here. The central idea was Socialism as the creator of liberty—but I talked at some length of the family and ideas of sexual morality. My friends say I am obsessed with sex nowadays; perhaps that is true. However, I stirred up the best Fabian discussion we have ever had here. Newnham was very shocked. . . . I was very serious, but I felt some qualms afterwards and wondered if I really had talked merely to satisfy myself and might have made a more profitable farewell address, but on reflection I am glad I said what I did. The family is going to be the crux of the whole social question, and some one has got to open the eyes of these virgins. Of course the respectables predominated

and got up and talked sentiment, but there were a good few men in sympathy with me.

. . . . .

If we ever are to break the family or—which is a better way of putting it—secure liberty for other forms of social organization, it will be, not primarily through the dissemination of theories, but because of the growth of personal dislike for the institution, which I find a very large proportion of my friends have in common with me. It is one of my dreams that through my numerous and growing friendships with Cambridge and Oxford and other Socialists of my own generation, I may be able to do something towards creating a large enough body of opinion to make a development, in those other forms which are to supersede family organization, possible. It does not take a vast number of individuals to clear a space in the jungle of convention sufficiently large for experiment—provided only we keep together closely. A hundred really determined individuals in more or less important positions, some of them with a measure of economic independence, can do a good lot to influence public opinion.

I made a miserable speech against Harold Cox here the other night. I am just now in an awkward stage for a Socialist agitator—knowing enough economics to have undermined the enthusiastic cocksureness with which I used to roar my half-truths, and yet not having ideas and facts sufficiently at my fingers' ends to have acquired the confidence that is bred of deep knowledge. However, I can see what I need in order to increase my power—which is the most important thing at my age.

I daren't re-read this letter, or I should tear it up for its pages of ceaseless egoism. However, if you are bored you must say so and it will be a good lesson to me.

To the Same.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
30 *June*, 1908.

I am more or less in solitude in Cambridge now, and am having an opportunity for some healthy meditation as well as work.

I have been thinking over things in general a good bit and have come to several conclusions. . . .

I am going to do nothing but work for two months till I go to Wales. I have started at it pretty solidly, and I shall probably go down to Lyndhurst in a day or two to continue grinding without any interval. I have also come to the conclusion that if I have any more of Cambridge it will do me harm. I have rather shut myself off from realities—I mean democratic realities—lately for the sake of acquiring intellectual knowledge and also for the sake of cultivating sides of myself in a hothouse manner. I feel I have been losing some of my old fire. That was inevitable for a time. You can't go on ranting quite so readily if you are conscious of economic difficulties at every step. But I see there is a danger of becoming a slave of economic facts instead of their master, and when I have gone through the economic grind which I am setting myself, there is a danger that I might find my enthusiasm gone. But I am determined that shan't be. . . . So once I have slept my forty-five nights in order to get my £20 for this quarter, let there be an end of Cambridge for me. I feel I must have a wider world.

6 a.m. Three miles up the river.

I have been camping out up here last night. It has been a glorious night and morning. When I went to sleep soon after 10 and again when I first woke at 12.45 it was light enough to read, and on both occasions there was a long stretch of red and yellow sky to be seen in a gap in the woods. I slept in a field of newly cut grass, and the smell is one for the nostrils of the gods. This morning I rose soon after 4 and walked a good way up the river. It was simply glorious. Fresh woods, grass with jovial-looking cart-horses feeding and eyeing me in a brotherly way, the steaming river, a cornfield with poppies in it, an oat-field with dew on the white grains glistening in the sun, roses everywhere along the bank, sometimes growing on the top of the willow-tree trunks and forget-me-nots at frequent intervals. I am now lying again in the field where I slept

amid the glorious smell of the cut grass and with the joy of " bird song at morning " in the woods round me.

Nature will afford my chief relaxation and my only passion for the next two months anyhow . . . though I admit I can't get B. out of my mind. The sight of the sunset as I went to sleep last night and my walk this morning made me think of her. . . .

Back to economics.

To the Same.

BANK, LYNDHURST.

6 *July*, 1908.

I have been here alone since last Thursday. I got your letter a day or so after I came. Needless to say the forest is simply glorious just now. Since Friday it has been quite cool too. I read a lot out of doors, but the little sitting-room is quite a good place to work in as the sun is only on it in the afternoon. I am now under a tree on the hill overlooking the hamlet where we came on the afternoon when you arrived. . . .

I have read " Jude the Obscure " since I came down here. I remember you talked about it when you were here. It is an extraordinary book. I wish I had read it earlier. But then, one can only interpret books in the light of one's own experience. A few days before I left Cambridge I got together about a dozen Fabians to read " Man and Superman." We read the whole play, including Act III. I read " John Tanner," and I believe I read it rather well; at any rate, I enjoyed it hugely. But what surprised me most was the enormous number of ideas which I saw in the play as compared with what I had seen when I read it just a year ago. Practically the whole of that lecture Shaw gave on " Marriage " at the school is contained in the play and appendixes, besides a lot of other things on the same subject. . . .

I suppose there really is quite a large ferment in society generally at the present moment on the subject of marriage and the family as institutions. And yet how small it seems compared with the vast mass of unthinking acquiescence

or hypocritical makeshift. One aspect of the thing as it concerns myself has been in my mind on and off since I came down here—that is, the extent to which one has to be double-faced about one's real moral attitude. I don't propose to solve the question for myself, much less for any one else, in a doctrinaire way. But the problem has just begun to show itself in my life in a small way. I believe what perhaps helps me more than anything else in my dealings with people is my openness and candour. It's not a virtue—often it's a nuisance both to others and to myself: but I simply can't help it. It is the result of stupidity—I'm a very poor liar, and I don't like having secrets that I share with no one at all. . . . If I had to go about the world concealing a large part of my life, it would rob me of much of my power—such as it is. And whatever may be the value of political or any other kind of respectability I don't think I shall do it. And if I act up to my ideals I don't see why I should have to, for we are fighting for what is really an ethical advance. I have always found that if I keep that notion honestly in my head I can make men who *a priori* hate my principles at least listen to me.

I had no idea Hardy was such a thinker as well as an artist. Having little or no literary feeling, I am rather a sentimentalist about novels when they really get hold of me, and the last sixty pages of " Jude " simply tortured me. I am conscious enough of my own ignorance of the psychology of women. But, good God! How much less some men know—and how little they seem to learn in a lifetime! I came across a curious statement in " Weininger " the other day to the effect that no woman has ever given an account of her feelings during pregnancy (he says generally that it is only through men that we can learn about women). I doubt if the statement is true, but I wondered if there were any basis for it.

I am grinding away at Marx now. It is somewhat hard and there is rather a lot of unnecessary, rather nonsensical wordiness mixed up with the essential stuff and some jovial and blasphemous metaphors and epigrams.

I shan't come up to the Fabian soirée, partly because I am in a semi-melancholy and rather lonely mood just now, and partly because I am growing a beard and it is not quite a fortnight old and looks rather awful. Look here ; won't you come down for next week-end on Saturday ? You can get a week-end ticket to Lyndhurst. If you can't do that, you must come to Cambridge.

To the Same.

LYNDHURST. 8 *July*, 1908.

Thanks so much for your letter which came this morning. I don't think I shall come up to town this week.

The beard is at an awful stage. But I don't want to sacrifice it and go through all the previous development again ; and it will mean that I can't start again till after I have been to Mrs. Webb on the 17th. But perhaps I might keep it on as it is, even if I came, though I should have to summon up a lot of courage.

I have been working at Marx all day and am getting very keen on it. I go very slowly but am getting more and more interested. Of course there are definite fallacies—glaring fallacies—but at times the spirit and style are full of dignity and force. And the book is well worth reading after one knows something of the classical school.

. . . . .

Wednesday evening.

I went for a long walk this afternoon over the hill in the wood which we climbed on that wet morning. It had poured with rain for some time this morning and the woods were glorious, with the sun shining on the wet trees and grass. At first there were heavy black clouds about and the undulating pine-woods looked almost like South German scenery. There is a beautiful avenue of those cone-shaped firs just beyond the point which we reached, and farther on still a lot of open moorland on high ground above the woods.

I was in a mood for Nature, and shouted motives out of "Siegfried" and the "Walküre" from pure joy.

To the Same.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
21 *July*, 1908.

Thank you very much for your letter. I am so glad you were able to see R.[1]

I turned out some sort of a report for Mrs. Webb with the assistance of one or two other men and went to stay with them on Thursday. Needless to say I had a most interesting time in very many ways. I shan't have time to tell you anything that happened now. But about the most important thing was that I definitely settled on what I shall turn my hand to, at any rate for the present. In accordance with their suggestion, I shall select a working-class borough, settle down there next October or September, do everything I can in the way of local politics and administration, possibly try my hand at some writing, anyhow finish off my Bar exams., and look out for the secretaryship of any public or semi-public committee which is going.

I am quite clear now that this is right. It is what I have intended to try for ultimately for some years, only I came to set up as preliminary tasks trying for a Trinity Fellowship and the South African expedition. The latter must go by the board; I am sorry in many ways, but it seems best. I may still try for the Trinity Fellowship; it seems rather poor to stop trying for a thing. But I feel that it will not be from weakness if I let it go altogether. I know I have got the will to make myself grind at research for two years if I like, but I am thoroughly convinced that I am not primarily or indeed to any great extent a man of books. When I tabulate the pros and cons as to whether I shall make the fellowship my main object for two years, the cons clearly predominate :—

Pro. (1) An excellent start in life if I get it—would give me credit, etc. (2) ? £1,400 or so in cash. (3) A good training—in fact, grubbing, and a more or less useful agglomeration of facts for political purposes.

Con. (1) My chances are not very great. (2) If I don't

[1] My daughter, whom he married in 1909, at this time in prison as a suffragist.—E.T.

get it I am practically two years behind in politics. (3) I have not got sufficient brain to go in for politics keenly and at the same time do purely academic research. I am too keen and get too excited about the former. (4) I shall learn far more by a combination of local administration and reading economics, etc., with a view to applying it to practical problems than by anything else I can do during the next few years (5) The political prospects look promising for me. (6) Cash is not an essential to me. (7) A Trinity Fellowship, as against a Trinity Scholarship, will not add vastly to my reputation among Socialists, etc. Also it is not reputation but present personality that really counts.

Anyhow I have decided; and I am going to start stirring up some borough next autumn. I have already communicated with Bray, Ensor, Sanders, and some of my Labour friends in Southwark with a view to making my choice. I think it will be Southwark unless I hear of any place more promising.

. . . . .

I am probably coming to town for a day to see Ensor, Sanders, etc., soon. I would stay the night with you only I think I must come back here and go on with my profitable slumbers—it works out at nearly ten shillings a night if I get the full forty-four done.

The Fabians here are very keen on my taking this line. As it happens, the two leading men now both have a chance of securing a measure of financial independence as soon as they finish up here, and if I succeed in showing that there is a useful career on the lines I suggest they will probably come and join me. I hope my friend Dudley Ward will come and live with me at once and give me some help. I have hopes that I might secure a regular stream of Cambridge Socialists for South London. It would really be a new movement—no damned ideas of religion, philanthropy, or " social service," but a plain carrying out of what will in the future become normal activities of citizenship. By God! if we could capture a Borough Council or a Board of Guardians we would shift something.

I wish I were going to set about to earn my living in some ways. Webb said I might be making £300 a year by

writing, if I turn my work into articles, etc., in a few years. But I don't believe I have got the readiness for that sort of thing. So long as I really am doing work, and damned hard work, it won't matter not making money. And I think I shall manage to find plenty to do.

This decision has put new life into me. I am working at "Industrial Democracy," "Progress and Poverty," and dipping into the later volumes and miscellaneous works of Marx.

. . . . .

God! how sex seems to distort our lives so often, when it ought to be the core of their fullness! There is no dignity in this continual pointless obsession with the thing. How we misinterpret our own personalities over it and other people's! I felt almost a cynic the other night. E. was in my rooms—he is up here for the long vac.—talking about C. D. But he was not really talking about her. He cannot know her as she is. He misses much that is bad and almost as much that is good. Of course we can only interpret others by what is in ourselves—and when we are in love by what is highest in ourselves, I suppose. But while E., who is still passionately in love with her, was talking away, I could do nothing but sit and think. There was nothing discreditable to her in the situation. Only the contemplation of E.'s utter misunderstanding and ignorance and blindness makes me so mad at the universal folly, though, no doubt, he gets a thousand things—truths one might call them—out of life from his passion that I miss with my (comparative) reasonableness. Why do I see truth more than he? And yet I know there is something wrong in his incapacity to see facts, though it may not be all loss.

Look here; do select some day next week to come and see me. I should like you to come and see me while I am still at Cambridge. Is the Summer School business still pressing?

You can spare one night away.

I am writing this by the twilight on the top of my tower. It is getting dark now and I must resume my economics. Good-night. Do come down.

The Fabian Summer School opened again in August, and Keeling returned to Llanbedr, almost as to a home, having persuaded several of his best friends to join him there. He arrived first, and after a week or two went off to meet them for a walk over the mountains. Two of the following letters were written during this expedition and the rest from a tent on the shore to which he withdrew later on.

To the Same.

BIRCHER KNOLL, LEOMINSTER.
10 *o'clock Wednesday night*, 28 *August*, 1908.

Just a line to post to-morrow. I have had a most enjoyable day with Dalton, Shove, Brooke, Schloss, and Strachey. You may know some of the names. This evening Dudley Ward turned up unexpectedly, which was very jovial. I look forward to the society of some of my dearest Cambridge friends with that of the Pen-yr-alt people very much. We are off to Llanferfechan at eight o'clock to-morrow.

Last week was a strain for me in many ways. I came utterly tired mentally. I was dissatisfied with and worried over my last two lectures, and of course sex came in again as the last straw. What a damned fool I am, or rather how unbridled my emotions are!

. . . . . .

The fact of the matter is that by the time I left Pen-yr-alt I was being eaten up by a kind of wild attraction I have never felt before and did not want—for X. By God! you will laugh at me for a fool some day, only don't just now. I was fighting that thing more and more every day. I was alternately seeking out and avoiding that woman. I have never felt myself lose my self-possession in any one's presence so much before. I always knew what I was immediately about before with any woman. She knew something was up. I tramped all day Monday with Baynes, R——, and C—— in order to get the atmosphere of the mountains and of straightforward comradeship with the three people there who could give it me best. Then I was all right and hugely happy. But till I was well off, and when I got back, this curious, absolutely involuntary, driving, haunting desire which was quite new

came over me. There is no choice or the minimum of choice in it. . . .

Oh, it is so stupid and I feel tired and maimed about it. It was an effort to drag myself away yesterday. I know she is leaving on Saturday. I knew it was best and I knew I must go, but I could not pull myself together. So I muttered something about seeing her in town and simply turned and jumped on to my bicycle and bolted. . . . I must go to bed. I don't know whether I shall post this. I hate this instability on the sexual side of myself. I am trying to make myself more stable in every way. But if you were dissatisfied with me very much in the last few days, please remember this thing was growing in me. I suppose I shall get rid of it. That will make it still more silly. But at any rate it is real, and I feel a wildness about the whole thing I have never known before. Well, perhaps this letter will never go. If it does go, here is a study in human caprice for you and a flashlight on the vitals of an honest fool.

NEAR LLYN OGWEN

(*At Supper in a Farmhouse with Baynes, Dukes, Hubback*).
10 *o'clock Thursday night*, 29 *August*, 1908.

"Pedestrian exorcism."

Rather a good Meredithian phrase. Exactly what I have been doing to-day. I have been walking the devil out of me. But there was a ghost by my side at intervals. I am in glorious physical condition and couldn't stand the slow pace of the majority when we left Llanferfechan. So Godwin and I got ahead. We had all made this place our objective. Godwin and I lost our way, got off the main ridge, and came around through a long valley and marsh and by Lord Penrhyn's quarries. We found Hubback and Dukes here. The others (four in number) had all crocked up, and gone down to Aber. The opening climb up from Llanferfechan was very stiff and they were in bad training. I am going along a hefty traverse on Tryfan with Bill to-morrow. The others are going up a milder way. Glorious country and views. But I can't get back my untroubled exuberance. She will probably have gone when you get this. I don't know how stupid the letter I scribbled last night is, but I will send it after all.

The others demand bed and I must stop soon. We shall meet the four weaklings at Llanberis to-morrow night. I am going to sleep out with Dukes.

I shall be glad to see you again; this walk is glorious, but I am haunted and I can't exorcise the devil completely, and it gives me a kind of mental tiredness which conflicts with the physical joy of the mountains. Good-night.

To the Same.

ON THE SHORE AT LLANBEDR.
1 *September*, 1908, 10.30 *p.m.*

I have been lying listening to the river for a long time. As Bill has probably told you, we put the tent up temporarily only a short distance from the bridge, right on the river bank. The sound of the water is wonderful. There is the gentle ripple of the surface water on the rocks, the steady drumming of the main stream, and a sort of sucking swirl every few seconds like a great, jovial, overfed beast grunting. I wish I knew a piece of music that expressed the spirit of a stream of this size as the overture of "Rheingold" expresses the might of a giant river.

It was really impracticable to get the tent over the sandhills to-night. Amongst other things, I couldn't get a lantern, also there is no fresh water by the sandhills; so I stopped here to-night and asked Bill to send two sturdy men to help me take the tent and other things two or three miles early to-morrow.

I must resist the temptation to make psychical *corpora vilia* of people generally (silly insects insist on outraging my humanitarian sentiments by immolating themselves in my candle). What a lot of people I seem destined to bring trouble upon, either by crashing about and experimenting in relationships with them or else by demanding their sympathy. I am appalled by the thought often. Yet I don't will to do it. Perhaps I shall learn to be less of a nuisance some day, or to pay back some of the debt vicariously.

2 *September.*

I have just come up to the inn for dinner; somewhat tired after transporting the tent and my goods to the shore

with the aid of D. and S. We had rather a business getting the tent up in the wind. I trust I shall not find it blown down when I return. I believe it is in the exact spot where you and R. and I spent several hours one very hot day a year ago. Do come down to-morrow.

To the Same.

5 *September.*

It is 1 a.m., but the situation is so delightful that I must write you a few lines before I sleep. I got a kettle in the village after leaving you and came back via the station and Mochras Farm. They are willing to give me meals there, and, if I like, a room, or to let me pitch my tent there in a field overlooking the sea. The evening and night have been glorious, a moon for several hours over the sea, clear starlight, and scarcely any wind. I dragged up an enormous log and have got a splendid fire by which I am lying now, wrapped in your rug. The tide is pretty high, so the waves are roaring steadily and every now and then a bird whistles. I am going to sleep outside the tent by the fire. It has been so glorious. I wish you had been here.

But I must sleep now if I am to catch the 7.19.

To the Same.

10 *September.*

I felt rather bored with K. on our walk this morning, but we had at his suggestion a glorious bathe in a pool we passed in the woods. It was raining at intervals, so no one was likely to come. The sun came out suddenly and the pinewoods to the left above the rocks stood out against a glorious piece of blue sky. I shouted and splashed about for joy. Now I am going back to my island.

I am learning a lot from Morley's "Gladstone." I have really only just begun to learn about men's motives and methods from history. One requires experience of one's own to go on first, before one gets much from books; at least, I do.

Do meet me soon.

(Written in showers of rain on the Artro bank near where we walked the other day.)

To the Same.

IN THE WOODS BEHIND PEN-YR-ALT.
Sunday, 13 *September*, 1908.

. . . I am conscious of an almost restless energy in me. (That is no boast, for energy in itself is not good or bad.) It finds expression in numberless actions, every one of them small or great, the result ultimately of an inexplicable impulse generally having some definite sudden origin at some moment of time. How far other men act in this way I don't know. I only know that my whole life consists of a constantly overflowing stream of energies partially guided by reason, experience rather than logic being the most important instrument of the guiding power. This is the most accurate account I can give of my own life processes. The obvious result of them is that there is a constant process of selection going on between numberless experiments—a regular struggle for existence. Of course my progress depends largely on very many experiments being made which are detrimental to other people as well as myself. God knows that I suffer enough from the contemplation of the fact. Yet I do not shrink from it. My faith in myself, my will to live, call it what you will, accepts it as inevitable and marches on. I feel somehow that, whether for good or for evil, that marching on is the advance of an entity which is always greater than the mere ego which is writing this crude piece of psychology to you.

I caused years of suffering to the mother who bore me and now I have caused indefinite suffering to F., yet I would willingly atone for either of these courses of action by any work of expiation. I would consciously select a life of narrower interests, less effective work, less dear friendships and loves if by so doing I could increase the well-being of my fellow-men. But the point is one does not consciously select one's life : and the ego that would alone be capable of conscious selection is only a part of the driving force that makes up the larger whole. . . . I believe if there is anything in the feelings of humility and unworthiness which the greatest Christian teachers have spoken of, I am experiencing these sentiments at this juncture of my life.

CHAPTER III

WALWORTH

OCTOBER, 1908, TO OCTOBER, 1909 (AGED 22–3)

AT the end of the Welsh holiday Ben went back to Cambridge for a few weeks, and then finally gave up his much-loved rooms under the tower in Trinity Great Court, and came to live in London.

He and a friend took part of a grimy house in the Walworth Road, where he plunged at once into local politics and social work. Care Committees were being formed all over London, and the work of helping to organize them was a congenial task, and one that brought him into contact with several new people.

Few letters are available for this period, from October, 1908, to October, 1909. He wrote but little to me as he was frequently coming to see me at Hurlingham. The year was, however, so eventful for him and marked so rapid a change in character and outlook, that some record of it seems essential. The following entries from his diary may serve to fill the gap.

FROM HIS JOURNAL.

187 WALWORTH ROAD.
30 *September*, 1908.

Tidied papers. Worked at Hobson's "Economy of Distribution." Called on J. R. MacDonald with D. Saw first Mrs. MacDonald. Then J. R. M. came in. A born politician, strong will, fine head, good brain. Arranged to tramp with them some day in Bucks. Dined with M.[1] Returned. Listened S.D.F. meeting on unemployment. Crude. But one man knew something about details of administration and the whole thing inspired me. Something dramatic about street-corner meetings—voice of Demos. Worked at Hobson. D. returned and told me both elected on committee of Fabian Nursery. Good to

[1] "M." in the journal stands for "Mother." He was in the habit of calling me so at this time.—E.T.

get in touch with all sorts of political work, though not very keen on this. Getting to like the feel of London.

14 *November*, 1908.—Read Adam Smith. 4.30.—Walked to Tower Bridge and back, looking in at Old Kent Road reading-room. I.L.P. social. Very few turned up, read extract from Shaw to them. Others came later. Explained theory of monopoly rent till 12.45.

15 *November*.—Slept till nearly eleven by mistake. Rushed to Hurlingham and got half a game of hockey. Ran round field for exercise. Lunched at M.'s with C. B., Mrs. S., and T. Discussed economics. I felt a little irritated. I am sure they were talking bosh often, and yet my knowledge was not enough to prove to them where they were wrong. Talked to M. and Brian about Socialist State Church and M.'s lax ideas of truth! Returned home, prepared lecture nominally on "The Spirit of Democracy," really on my conception of State Church. This religious phase really seems to be getting hold of me. Lecture went pretty well. Four old Browning Hall men, who had known me there two years ago, came to hear me—good solid men; I liked T. P. especially. Must try to get them into I.L.P.

16 *November*.—Read Adam Smith till four, meant to go to Abbey service but found it is at three. Read "Way of all Flesh." Felt very lonely. A letter came from M. beginning "Dear Keeling." Why am I so sensitive? I can't help it. I wish I had some one with me whom I could love and sympathize with completely. I fear I may never find such a person. Most of us never do, I suppose. Went out to walk streets in order to get comradeship of many faces. Dined in a French restaurant in Soho. Thought of B. Had a half-bottle of wine and cigarettes for once, felt more cheerful.

. . . . .

18 *November*.—Wrote letters. Read Adam Smith. Went to afternoon service at Westminster Abbey at 3 p.m. Enjoyed it very much. Went to House of Commons to see J. R. M., who had written about the possibility of my translating a book by Bernstein. While waiting for him, had a few words with Keir Hardie, who was with Pease.

I love Hardie, and still think he is the most hated and most loved man in England to-day. He looks older and his hair is whiter, but he is as upright as ever, and his eyes still have their wonderful, clear-sighted look. Talked to J. R. M. about translation work and Southwark politics, including possibility of S. as Candidate, J. R. M. approved. He is a first-rate politician, but what a contrast to Keir! I don't like his expression of reticence, but he has probably done a great deal for the cause in providing organizing ability and tact. Went to School of Economics and continued reading Smith. Much struck with the section in the last book on the provision of Justice. I feel the inadequacy of economics to take one to the root of social problems. They are all ultimately problems of the control and use of power—psychological and physical—mostly the former. Could not one work out a sociological theory on these lines? I must read some sociology.

I feel more and more the need of controlling my tongue. I am always speaking on the impulse of the moment—saying things in conversation which I feel a little ashamed of a few hours later, and speaking partly for effect with particular people, rather than with a spirit of true self-realization. To attain common truth and honesty a conscious effort—or at least a conscious training—is necessary. In the individual, as in society, simplicity is the goal and not the starting-point of development. How little is this realized!

. . . . .

BOURNE COTTAGE.
9 *December*, 1908.

I have thought much of my action in the Southwark I.L.P. during my stay here. I see that I have, to some extent, made the same mistake as I did when I became a prefect at Winchester—insisted too much on forcing an intellectual conception of what was in my own mind on simple-minded people—leading to inevitable misunderstandings. And yet that is what the Southwark I.L.P. would call more "democratic." But it is no use putting your own terminology to people who think in an utterly

different way, and no use putting all the considerations which weigh with you to people who can't appreciate them all. I am not going to be obsessed with the I.L.P. so much. It is not advisable even from the practical point of view. And more fundamentally I need to act more in consideration of the factors of my own personality—more on the Stoic principle of self-sufficiency (which conflicts in no way with my social theories of morality—at least, I don't think it does; must work it out some time).

To Mrs. Townshend.

NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.
9 *December*, 1908.

I have started on my Care Committee work. We have also launched our Central Association of Care Committees for the whole district.

How splendid the teachers are! I have found two or three I am tremendously enthusiastic about. I love to get in direct contact with the really vital forces of the constructive collectivism of our time, especially in men and women whose characters embody the positive attitude towards the State.

I have practically been beaten on my I.L.P., pro tem. at any rate, and yet I don't regret all the energy I have put into these petty squabbles of a seemingly ignoble type. I have learned much; and I have formed a few friendships with working-men which I value as much as any I have ever made. Of course I shall stick to the I.L.P.

. . . A word. You don't know how much I feel being looked on as a kind of backslider from the true line of progress by you. Do please think once again whether I could have taken any other line. I have never wavered from the fundamental position which I gradually came to conceive as my Socialism became more and more deeply rooted —the combination of the revolutionary spirit and the practical or evolutionary method. If ever a man has had an experience which might turn him back to the normal line of political action (i.e. in my case the Progressive Party; national politics don't matter so much for me at present),

I have had that experience in the last three months. I could get all the practical work I long for more than anything by working with the Progressives with a quarter the trouble which I shall have in getting it along with the Labour and Socialist people. But I am going to stick to the latter, why I don't exactly know. There is little to be said for it from a practical point of view, and I have seen enough of "democratic" politics to sicken me of them for life. Yet faith in the ideal seems important still, and I will risk much loss of power for it. If you think it ignoble of me to be tempted, well, I can't help it. Only talking "independence" and acting it (when your deepest passion is to feel yourself doing things) are two very different matters. . . .

To the Same.

BOURNE COTTAGE.
23 *December*, 1908. 8.30 *p.m.*

I came down here this afternoon and am revelling in peace and solitude. I have not seen B. since she resented my last letter. It is a curious thing that she and A. after coming to know me well both complained of what they call my brutality. It came out again when I was talking to B. about my children's homes. I said it was "grand sport" rushing about to secure medical treatment for a baby with fits. She was simply shocked, just as A. used to be when I explained how obvious it is that one must always sacrifice individuals, whatever their general position or relation to oneself, to the general good.

I am beginning to think that women, unless they have a strong dash of the masculine, are incapable of overpowering impersonal motives (but so are many men; so probably it is not a matter of sex). I have noticed several times that my entire disregard of any individual feelings when I am aiming at what I conceive to be a social end strikes many people as simply horrible. Perhaps I have got something missing in the gamut of my emotions. At any rate, I know when I am tramping about Walworth, visiting the homes of necessitous children, etc., although I find I get on with both the women and the men extra-

ordinarily well, yet the emotion I feel aroused again and again by the sights I see is one of a passionate love for the life of men in general, as it might be and as it is, not primarily a sympathy for the particular individuals I am in touch with.

The story of the baby with fits is this. I went to see the home of two children we are feeding. Both the man and the wife are delightful people and I learned a lot from them. The children, too, are very well looked after externally. But the mother is evidently as ignorant about the hygiene of child life—well, I was going to say as I am. Her two little girls, about eight and ten, are charming, their hair well brushed and their clothes tidy and clean, and I felt much less afraid of them than I am of most children. They were delightfully approachable. I had a jovial talk with all of the family and then asked about the baby. The mother said, in a resigned way, " Oh, I'm afraid I am going to lose him, he keeps on having fits." So I at once explained to her the danger of casual dosing with medicines she really knew nothing about. I then made inquiries where the baby could be treated, found out where there were hospitals in the north of Southwark, and as the woman is *enceinte* gave her the price of a tram fare there. I called to see her yesterday but found her out.

Now, what I think about primarily in connection with this business is the ghastly fact that hundreds of thousands of mothers are as ignorant and as well-meaning as this poor woman. Whether this particular baby lives or dies seems to me very unimportant compared with the devising of practical measures to meet the general situation. (As far as I can discover—I have been inquiring from various people about babies' fits—there is no reason why this baby should die.) And I feel it is a great and glorious thing to be getting to grips with a huge social problem first-hand, and I call letting off my energy in this or any other way grand sport, and if the feminine temperament demands that I should be continually gravely sympathetic with individuals instead of enthusiastic for collectivist hopes, then either it has a damned rotten point of view or I am fundamentally vicious. I do care for man in the mass

above anything, and I would sacrifice my dearest friends as readily as I would myself for any social ends. It seems to me that the idea that family relationships or even friendships are necessarily or should be the bases of stronger passions than the passion for humanity is simply wrong. Christians are not called brutal or unfeeling for putting the love of God above all things, and why I should be called cruel because (without any virtuous effort, but simply naturally) I count the welfare of men for nothing as against the welfare of man, I can't see.

I wish you were here. I have lots of things to talk to you about. But I want to go to bed now, though it is only just past nine, in order to be fresh to read and commune with my soul to-morrow. I shall write you again soon. I wish Christmas were really a jovial communal festival and that I were going to spend it with you. But we of this generation are destined to be rather stage carpenters than actors in the drama of life—and jovial communal festivals, like many other things, must be enjoyed mentally in anticipation.

The above letter was written during a week (23 to 29 December) which he spent at the cottage that had been lent to him, quite alone, except that A. Y. Campbell joined him there for the last two days. He records in his journal: "27 *December*, 1908.—C. arrived. Talked a lot to him. On the 28th had an especially long discussion on the essence of tragedy, which he illustrated excellently from Sophocles' 'Antigone.' This was mostly on a long walk on a delightful frosty morning during which we visited the Greek theatre at Bradfield school, C. declaiming magnificently to me from the stage. I still have hopes that I may become more civilized in time."

On 30th December Ben turned up quite unexpectedly at Bath, where I and my son were staying. He wanted to consult me as to various schemes that had been taking shape in his mind. "I had been thinking a good deal," he writes in his journal, "at the cottage about the possibility of starting out to earn my living in the 'wild places of the earth' (as dear Hugh says) with £20 in my pocket, trying to work my way round the world in two years or so, starting in the spring. Had decided, at any rate, to let the idea simmer. I had discussed the idea with M. on the preceding evening. She insisted very wisely on the need for me to mature myself now; was not hostile to the idea, but felt more strongly the need

for me to put more direct purpose into my life; urged me again to try for a Trinity Fellowship."

From Bath he went to Cumberland to join Dr. McCleary and some friends of his in rock-climbing, an exercise that Ben loved but in which he was only a beginner and a clumsy one.

From his Journal.

4 January, 1909.

I went up Moss Ghill with H. and G. Did pretty well, only had to be helped with the rope slightly in two places. Walked to summit of Scawfell. Had glorious views, especially coming down. The reflections in Wastwater particularly beautiful. Mist only on top of Scawfell.

Have been talking to McCleary and thinking a good deal about political science, particularly in the way of social psychology, here. I think I may yet write something for a Trinity Fellowship, or at any rate for a D.Sc. at the School of Economics, to which my South African work, the Webbs' and M.'s influence in making my political thought more constructive, my experience in politics and social work, my general historical and economic reading, and a future study of psychology and political theory will all contribute. I have been making a good many notes lately, starting with a vague "theory of social power."

I feel very keen in plunging back to work. I feel more definite about it now. I have three things to occupy myself with—(1) reading with a view to writing something, (2) school-feeding, (3) "Facts for Southwark" tract. They all fit in together rather well. Besides this I shall have a little Socialist lecturing, the Labour Party and possibly I.L.P. Congress, and a more or less passive membership of the I.L.P. in Southwark. This will mean a good deal more concentrated effort than in the last three months.

Walworth. 11 *January*, 1909.

I have been mainly occupied to-day with school-feeding. I ladled gravy for 170 children, and endeavoured to persuade a few not to suck their knives, between twelve and three o'clock.

My baby with fits has not yet visited the hospital, and its mother is now apparently in no condition to take it.

I am almost in despair, but I visited the hospital this afternoon and have written to E. M. to help me take it there to-morrow.

Only twenty children from my own school are being fed. I am taking charge of them personally to-morrow. I believe I shall not have the face to say grace when it comes to the point.

To Mrs. Townshend.

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.
2 *February*, 1909. 10.30.

I am devoting all my energies to this Care Committee organization work. It is a splendid experience in elementary administration, though perhaps a little too much trying to make bricks without straw; it is so hard to get any helpers at all, and still harder to get people of insight and intelligence and energy.

I am a little afraid of seeing you just now. I am moving rapidly farther and farther away from your political principles. I am having so many experiences of different kinds just now which compel me to regard the doings and still more the sayings of party politics more and more as the merest surface foam. And though I believe I am becoming more and more tolerant at bottom, I find it hardest of all to be tolerant of the particular brand of political talkers with whom I am brought most in contact. But the Portsmouth Conference strengthened my faith in the big trade unionist leaders. They represent the force which has driven the biggest wedge into the area of competitive industry, although there is a danger that they may fail to see (even more than the Socialists fail to see) the crying need for a strong State, as against a multifarious State.

I have been quite informally approached about two L.C.C. seats. I shall see a little closer what I think of prospects in that direction. But I rather fancy that in a few months I shall be some thousands of miles away, finding out what it really is to be a proletarian. The impulse recurs again and again, and I have learnt so much in these few months that I feel I must go much deeper.

But I have little time or energy left to sift things out now. I am satisfied with things for the present. I feel that I have got plenty of purpose in life and could not be finding things out, or indeed doing much more than I am at present.

I have stopped going to the opera, as I found it made me too tired to do this work properly.

I got a glorious draught of air and splendid scenery and sunshine on Sunday in Surrey. I hope to tramp with R—— next Sunday.

The good resolutions as to work and mental discipline with which, as we have seen, this new year (1909) had begun were overthrown by an insurgence of those emotional forces that he was so apt to leave out of account. This sort of interruption occurs in the life of most men, but Ben's volcanic energy and self-centred habit of mind served to turn it into a tragedy. He was far too immature for marriage (only twenty-two, and in some respects young for his age) and quite unfitted by his crude theories of life for the give and take of domestic companionship. Things might have righted themselves in time, but, unfortunately, in his revolt against the entanglements and perplexities of his new relationship, he grasped the first opportunity that offered of an entire change of scene and work—a change that deprived him for a time of the society of his equals and tended to emphasize his worst faults.

FROM HIS JOURNAL.

28 May, 1909.

My resolutions as to diary-keeping have been typical. However, I have not lost the desire to write down my impressions from time to time, and this period, from 29 January to 28 May, has not been uneventful. At least it has included one of the crises of my life.

I am now sitting on the upper deck of D.'s steam yacht enjoying a delightful passage from Salcombe to Exmouth. I feel in a sane mood for recording things.

I have fallen in love and married. . . . I regret nothing.

I look across a smooth, dark green sea to the red, rocky cliffs, showing here and there through vegetation; above them rich rolling green fields and above them again a bank of clouds, white and grey, and strong sunshine

overhead. And I feel a rich, satisfied joy in all that I rarely if ever knew before.

A single glance at R. when we were sitting side by side in the back row of the gallery at Covent Garden at a performance of the " Ring " began it all. It is good to have Wagner as one link in the chain.

For five or six Sundays in succession we tramped in the country, in Kent along the Pilgrims' Road and then to Gravesend; from Wokingham to Ascot, resting for an hour in a pinewood near the hut in February sunshine, anticipatory of spring. We missed our train at Ascot, and I ran eight miles to Windsor to catch another for an I.L.P. lecture in Hammersmith. Then another Sunday we walked in snow to Tunbridge Wells, where I was lecturing in the evening. I nearly spoke then. The next night, or the next but one, I was up at her rooms at Thornhill Houses to spend the evening with her. A momentary glimpse of her from the side, sitting in a dark blue pinafore over the kitchen fire, overcame me. We went out together into the streets and I told her I loved her.

. . . . .

We decided to marry but not to set up house together. We were married on the 15th May at 1.15 at the Southwark Town Hall. M. and Dudley, who was staying with me, were witnesses.

I believe the next day was the happiest I have ever spent in my life. R. was looking glorious in a light green dress with white silk embroidery. We slacked all day. In the early afternoon we walked up the river a little way, taking a ferry across and back again from the Bishop's park.

. . . . .

Such is a general summary of my history for the last four months. I would go through it all again if I had the choice. I do not regret my marriage in any way. What is in the future I have not the faintest idea. But the present is well worth living. I am looking forward with an anticipation of joy that I have rarely known to life in Buckinghamshire with R.

. . . . .

I have felt George Meredith's death more than I have ever felt the death of any literary man. I have just started reading his poems and revel in "Love in a Valley." R. has stirred up the Meredithian spirit in me. Since I came down to D.'s yacht (yesterday) I have read "Love and Mr. Lewisham." It is Wells at his best; in some respects it is better than "Kipps" or "Tono Bungay."

A great deal that I have written in this book looks crude and stupid and boyish even now. But I shall destroy nothing. It was what I felt as I could best express it at the time.

2 *August*, 1909.

Writing in cabin of a steamer on Lago Maggiore, in a thunder-storm. Have been staying a couple of days at Stresa with R. M. and C. Glorious weather till the last half-hour. Both yesterday and to-day we spent many hours on the lake in a boat bathing and sunning ourselves. We rowed over from Stresa to the opposite bank, near a tiny village called Santa Caterina. Yesterday afternoon, as it was very hot, we found a deliciously cool cleft in the rocks and tied the boat up in it. From it we could see the snow mountains in the distance and across the lake to Pallanza. The whole situation was splendid. R. was like a regular mermaid on the rocks.

I have now been married two and a half months and have, unfortunately, not carried out the resolution I made while yachting with D. to resume writing my journal regularly. . . . The month of June I spent partly in Missenden and partly in London, where I was mainly occupied with working for Mrs. Webb's National Committee to Promote the Break-up of the Poor Law.

At Missenden I endeavoured to concentrate on Roman Law, but the joys of living there with R. did not promote work.

I shall always look back on that month as one of the most valuable of my life. R. made the cottage a delightful place in appearance. She produced that clean, simple atmosphere which always surrounds her and her mother. . . . She harmonizes with an English rural environment better than any one I know. I think of sweet-smelling grass

lanes and beechwoods and the clean, whitewashed kitchen and bedroom and the scullery where I slush about in the morning and shout Wagner.

At the beginning of July, M., R., C., and I went to stay with a friend of M.'s at a chalet at St. Beatenberg on the Lake of Thun.

Miss Paget (a great friend of our hostess) was there, too, part of the time. She and I did not like one another. She was repelled by my crude, impulsive self-assertiveness. I do not think she was altogether just to me, nor I to her. But I had some interesting talks with her.

After the fortnight at Beatenberg, where I read some Roman Law and walked, mostly alone, C. and I set out on a four days' tour. R. was not able to do much walking owing to the coming infant, so she went on with M. to Aqua Rossa, where M. was going to do a cure.

C. and I walked the first day (mostly in rain or mist) via Interlaken to the Grosse Scheidegg. The other three days were very fine. On the second we got up at 5 a.m. and saw the sun rise over the mountains. We then walked via Rosenlaui to the Grimsel hospice. We had meant to get over the mountains to the Rhone Valley on the same evening, but there was snow on the path, mist came on, and the hour was getting late, so we gave up the attempt and slept at the crowded hotel. The following day we walked in glorious sunshine to Obergestellen and then over the Gries glacier to the Tosa Falls. The reaches of valley between the glacier and the Falls were full of the most glorious flowers I have seen in Switzerland. They were not very much wooded, and the little hamlets were not occupied as the cattle do not go up there till a little later in the year.

From the Tosa Falls on the following day we took a guide and went over the Antobbia glacier to San Carlo. We enjoyed tobogganing down the snow slopes on the Swiss side of the mountains tremendously. There was, however, a long, stony path down the cliffs above San Carlo which we found rather trying. We arrived there rather tired and rested for a couple of hours at the tiny inn In the evening we walked down the valley, I think

the deepest I have ever seen, to Bignano. I felt rather unwell and collapsed temporarily at one point on the way. The moment we got to the inn I went to bed. I got into rather a fever and talked about all sorts of things half consciously. C. nursed me splendidly. I felt very grateful and rather small, as I had been somewhat impatient with her rate of progress on the glacier. R. came next day and C. left on the Friday for Aqua Rossa.

R. and I then went up, on the doctor's advice, to Fusio, a cool place at the top of the valley, and stayed there for a week. I read some Law and walked, partly with R., more often alone. The valley above Fusio was, I think, the most beautiful I have ever seen. The shades of colour, green and grey, were softer than on the north side of the Alps, but the poverty of the peasants about Fusio and the squalor of the village, in spite of its beauty on the hillside, were rather repugnant to me. The inn, too, was not very attractive, so we left at the end of a week's stay, met M. and C. at Locarno, and took the steamer to Stresa. (I walked down to Bignano early in the morning, while R. took the diligence. The walk in the early morning air, between 5.30 and 8.15, was delightful and cool, as the sun did not come over the mountain till 7.30.)

I had been growing a little concerned about my future relations with R. during the week at Fusio. I think it was largely unnecessary, and due mainly to the fact that I have had nothing but female society for the last month and have rather craved for a hearty male oath (not but what C. and R. can swear quite naturally on occasion). I felt as I have felt all along, except perhaps for a short time when very much exhilarated at Missenden, that I did not want to set up house regularly with R. I can see that I should begin to long for the cut and slash of political and other discussions if I were boxed up with her alone to such an extent that I should become dissatisfied with her, and blind to her fine sides. Also I began to think about my future relations to my child, and came (I think, after talking to M.) to an unnecessarily clear-cut and dogmatic idea that if I were not to live in more or less the ordinary way with R. I should have no right to share

in the decisions to be made with regard to its education, about which I might possibly not always agree with R. At the same time, I began to feel that in leaving and coming to R. just as I feel inclined, though I do her no injury, even from a moral point of view, as far as I can see, and certainly do not make her unhappy, I appear again rather too much in the guise of the egoist for my liking; using my relations with another person rather as stepping-stones to experience for my own development than as ends in themselves, a soul-union.

I am going to Cambridge after a few hours in Walworth, mainly to settle up I.L.P. affairs. At Cambridge I shall read Law and jaw to old friends for a day or two. On the 27th I go to Wales, where Hugh has taken a farm-house near the F.S.S. Before I go there I hope to have a week or ten days at Missenden with R.

To A. Y. Campbell.

57 LIVERPOOL ST., WALWORTH, S.E.
19 *August*, 1909.

I sent you this afternoon a copy of Murray's "Greek Epic" which I think you said you would be using in the next few weeks. Our friend D. would deride my inscription[1] with heavy chortlings. Nevertheless . . . I am full of *joie de vivre* to-day. I believe I have a very good chance of getting a Labour Exchange appointment in a few weeks. I may be going to Germany in ten days to see Exchanges there and inquire about some points which I am investigating with a view to an article, pamphlet, or memorandum. On 28th inst. I am to meet Winston Churchill—who will have a great deal to do with Labour Exchange appointments—at dinner at the Webbs'. So I shall be back from Germany by then anyhow. Do let me see you for a day anyhow before you go to Reading —either in town or at Missenden.

To-night ——, myself, and —— and —— are going to see the "Meistersinger."

[1] "To A. Y. C. from his friend F. K. in memory of Sunday interchanges of wisdom."

I am still revelling in Murray's translation of the "Bacchæ." The page lies open before me.

> What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavour
> Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
> To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
> To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
> And shall not loveliness be lord for ever?
>
> And they win their will, or they miss their will,
> And the hopes are dead or are pined for still;
> But whoe'er can know,
> As the long days go,
> That to live is happy hath found his heaven!

And I dream of that other chorus—

> Where is the home for me?
> O Cyprus, set in the sea,
> Aphrodite's home in the soft sea-foam.
> . . . . .
> But a better land is there
> Where Olympus cleaves the air,
> The high, still dell where the Muses dwell,
> Fairest of all things fair!
> Oh there is Grace, and there is the Heart's Desire,
> And peace to adore thee, thou Spirit of Guiding Fire!

Religion in its individual aspect is the power that binds a man's moods together. I would that I had that mighty force—which enables the mood of inspiration to cast its glow across all the "hours of gloom" in which most of our tasks are fulfilled—making loveliness a thing that is really "loved for ever" and not merely snapped at in ecstasies and groped after or tolerated in the shadows of common night. Thus soliloquizeth Ben the Blasphemous while passing Westminster Abbey this afternoon.

Have you seen Rupert's poems in the *English Review*? You chafe at their "obscurity." But the flanks of the beasts and their steaming lusts gleam plainly—if naught else does.

I believe the welfare of the country is more entirely at stake over this Budget than it has ever been over a single

issue for many a long year. I would sacrifice anything if its passing depended on that. I believe we are going to win whether the Lords attempt to fight or no. It will be a mighty chisel stroke in the fashioning of our *Res publica* out of this shapeless rock that we worship in faith for what it shall be.

> And shall not loveliness be loved for ever?
>
> . . . . .
>
> But whoe'er can know,
> As the long days go, . . .

To Mrs. Townshend.

MISSENDEN.
6 *September*, 1909. *Sunday night.*

I returned from Wales on Saturday and have been here for the week-end. I am coming to town early to-morrow and shall stay there continuously till I go to Germany, except for next week-end. I will come to see you one night in the course of the week.

I am very glad I went to Wales for a week. The society of my friends and one or two tramps on the mountains were blessed. I feel more at peace with myself and the universe.

I almost hope for a job in a remote provincial town, where I shall have no antecedents and can spend my spare time reading in solitude and turning this undigested mass of experience which has made up my life into some shape. I am puzzled how I am to work things with R. if I am sent a couple of hundred miles away. But I will find a definite solution and then Peace!—and I will pray for a respite from personal incidents in my life till I am, say, thirty.

Bureaucracy and reading shall absorb me entirely if I can so contrive it—bar my old friendships. I feel my interest in literature growing a great deal stronger. I intend definitely to try to make it replace personal attractions in my life as much as I can. I am sick of having my power of dominating the course of events made less than it might be by distractions and uncontrollable moods.

FROM HIS JOURNAL.

WALWORTH.

24 *October*, 1909.

I have been living here with Ashley Dukes for nearly two months. I have seen very little indeed of R. I have been fairly happy, but have been haunted from time to time by evil spirits. To-day I have been feeling particularly gloomy. Ever since that time in Switzerland I have been puzzling again and again about the nature of right conduct. The week I spent at Cambridge was not a particularly cheerful one. I enjoyed meeting old friends, but I was troubled by the thought of my relations with R. continually. From Cambridge I went to Missenden, where I stopped a week with R. I next spent about five days with Brian and Miss G. at Hindhead, and then went to Llanbedr for a week, staying in a farmhouse with Hugh and two other Cambridge Fabians. Early in September I came here.

I never realized so clearly what an infernally difficult business life is, once you abandon some sort of tradition as a guide. It seems clear that there must be some sort of tradition for the mass of men, if only to avoid the enormous expenditure of energy which anarchists like myself are let in for.

I can't get away from the fact that I am not by any means satisfied about my relations with other people generally. In point of fact, I feel damned lonely. I have hardly seen anything of M. or of R. I like and admire Ashley tremendously. But I feel I want to love and be loved and to be able to express my affections. I feel a curious resemblance between my relations to M. and R. now and my relations to my mother when I was a boy. Not in detail. But I feel that I want ever so much to have that happiness that comes from living in affection with some one. I have got a sort of craving for it. And I feel that something, I don't know what, prevents me from securing the relation which I want. I wonder if there is something fundamentally wrong in my character or my outlook. Perhaps I am destined all my life to this. I don't know. It makes me miserable.

I have been reading one or two of Murray's translations of Euripides lately, also his wonderful Introduction to the volume that contains the "Bacchæ" and "Hippolytus." This has set me thinking. It seems to me that if public affairs are the main interest of one's life there is a great danger that one's affections will come to be dominated by one's intellectual ideas. I wonder whether that is what is wrong with me. I have often wrangled with M. over some political question and then been angry with myself afterwards. And it is because R. does not share my intellectual interests that I allow myself to be separated from her now.

Oh, if only I could love, love plainly, undisturbed by the clash of opinion, love my friends, love all men, and have some one very close lover! I seem to be made lonely by some isolating force.

On the other hand, I can't get away from the fact that, as things are, I find the intellectual interchange of opinions with friends such as Archie one of the very greatest pleasures I know, an almost indispensable thing in life.

I suppose things will be a bit clearer when my son—I feel it is more likely to be a son—arrives. I have dreamed for a long time to-day about a little baby's hands and arms about my face, and about kissing a little baby's lips. There must be a simple way of life if only I could see it. I feel something is blinding me. I feel this craving for love, I know there is love waiting for me, and yet I cannot go and give and receive it.

29 October, 1909. 10.45.

I have to-day started work temporarily with the Board of Trade. . . . I feel tolerably cheerful as to my prospects of work and experience. But I am beginning to see that I have lived with an utterly false conception of many things. Love and affection are among the best things in life. The trouble is that for me they seem to get hopelessly entangled with enthusiasm for intellectual conceptions, and when my opinions change love is broken though the craving for it remains.

What is the use of success if there is no one to rejoice with you? Satisfaction in bettering the lot of masses of people is good, but it is cold and lonely.

CHAPTER IV

LEEDS

JANUARY, 1910, TO JUNE, 1911 (AGED 23–4)

KEELING'S wish for a post in a "remote provincial town" was unfortunately fulfilled. He became manager in January 1910 of the Leeds Labour Exchange, and was able to start life entirely afresh, plunging with enormous zest into work which would have been uncongenial to most men of his upbringing, but which, for him, was full of interest and even of fascination.

The entire change of work and of environment enabled him to thrust aside and apparently to forget his responsibilities as husband and father in a way that was quite incomprehensible to many of his friends. It is impossible to excuse the extraordinary egotism of his outlook at this time. In order to understand it, one must recognize that, impulsive though he was, he yet acted far more on theory than most men, and that he was thoroughly imbued with the views as to marriage which he found, or thought that he found, in the writings of G. Bernard Shaw, whom he reverenced as the greatest living expert in conduct. Strange as it may seem, he went to Leeds convinced that the right thing for him to do was to devote himself wholly to public work, and to cut himself off entirely from the everyday pleasures and everyday worries of what he used to call "damned domesticity." He persuaded himself that his wife, for whose courage and independence of character he had the greatest admiration, was eminently suited to stand alone. Having provided, as he considered, for the maintenance of wife and child (he had, at this time, very ascetic notions, shared by his wife, as to personal expenditure), his one desire for the moment was to regain entire independence of action and to fling himself untrammelled into his new duties.

After a few months, his wife went up to Yorkshire with her baby and found a little cottage at Menstone within easy reach of Leeds. He went there pretty often and took his friends there, but he remained entirely engrossed by his work and quite irresponsive and aloof from any real community of interests. He called the place "R.'s cottage," and rather ostentatiously washed his hands of all responsibility. There was no definite disagreement, but the

effort made by his wife in leaving home and friends for his sake was so ill-recompensed, that it became obviously wiser, when it was necessary for her to leave the Menstone cottage, to return to London, and no further attempt at a common home was ever made.

Any memoir of Frederic Keeling which omitted these facts about his personal relations would be misleading, for they coloured his after life and throw light on many of his letters.

Writing several years later, when he was on a visit to Leeds, he tells me how much he had enjoyed revisiting the moors he liked so much, " except that, when in the neighbourhood of Menstone, I felt depressed by memories of the incomparable idiocy of my behaviour there."

To E. M. S.[1]

LABOUR EXCHANGE, MEADOW LANE, LEEDS.
8 *March*, 1910.

. . . I am enjoying life hugely here. I live in an attic at the top of the Exchange, and am gradually reducing myself to a fruit and nut diet which makes for great physical efficiency and saves cooking and the other various arts which involve the attendance of woman upon man.

I am, of course, not satisfied with the way things are going. We only placed 265 in February and have not got up to twenty a day yet. But I plug in, and it suits me down to the ground. I have no social life and avoid it as much as possible. My job involves speaking to about a hundred different people every day, and by the time I have finished about six o'clock I am damned sick of human personality. I never turned to books, memory, and imagination with such zest in my life.

I generally clear out of Leeds at ten o'clock on Saturday, and walk thirty to fifty miles on Saturday and Sunday. I am thinking of running over to Ireland for four days at Easter. I don't think I want a cottage. I am getting a passion for living with the minimum of worldly goods to bother about. I have four good-sized attics, but keep them all bare and clean—nothing but the barest necessities for sitting, eating, sleeping, and reading.

By God! I never felt so free in all my life. I am free

[1] The " Memoirs of F. H. K. as a Student of Social Problems," by his friend Mr. A. Greenwood (Appendix II), will throw light on this letter and those which follow it.

of ties—human and material—free of care, free to express myself as best I can in the only material that I can mould —the raw stuff of human institutions. It is a great life. It is so free because nothing but my own will prevents me from clearing off to Manitoba or Western Australia to-morrow.

I was called up to London to consult about various details of procedure a few weeks ago. I took the opportunity to visit my daughter. She is going on splendidly. On the whole it is a damned interesting thing to breed about the earth. I expect my daughter will dislike me violently. But if we happen to hit it off all right, it will be rather amusing when we are both of *an age to be able to be young* together. Perhaps I shall change in ten years, I don't know. But I have got a passion for two inexplicable things which I call Truth and Facts, and that passion makes me feel that the sentiment which makes a man want to live constantly with a woman may be bad as well as good. . . . However, I am no propagandist on these questions now, I am too conscious of my own limitations. I have too great a sense of the difficulty of doing anything but let people alone, and, by God! if the world doesn't let me alone in my ways it may maim me, but I will let it feel my teeth somehow and some time and know that they are pretty sharp.

I wish you could get a really good job. If you want to sufficiently—if you will give up everything else for it sufficiently—you will, although it is harder for a woman than a man. But the openings for women are growing so rapidly now.

I am getting a passion for studying this place. I have had a unique life in my chances of seeing different classes of society—really getting to know them. I am pushing on my experience in that direction as much as I can. I have even joined the Leeds Club—the exclusive snobbish club of the place—for the purpose of observing the habits of employers more closely. The only way to be sure of defeating a man is to be able to beat him at his own game. We have got to be able to be better capitalists than the capitalists are. When we—that is, the administrative

classes—have more will, more relentlessness, more austerity, more organizing ability, more class consciousness than they have, we shall crumple them in our hands. And, by God! you and I may live to see the beginning of the end.

I am more of a puritan than ever. Austerity is what is needed. These miserable employers are poor creatures in many ways. They eat too much; they drink too much; they want their women too much. By God! I will out-Bacchus any man when I choose. But it shall be of my free choice—not of a limp necessity. From day to day my dream shall be of a new model army, of vigilant administrators supplanting property by organization inch by inch, steadily and slowly—with a jovial carouse to loosen the muscles now and again. And to hell with the snufflers and the pimps alike. They shall go in pairs one of each to a hurdle after the precedent set by Henry VIII. . . .

There are very few women who can administrate. They are the women whom I feel are more than any other the ones who will cause women to cease to drag down men. I don't mean that really, but it comes near to being true. I think it really is true. We shall never be civilized till you can stand on your own legs. Therefore blame your own sex for causing the existence of the uncivilized product who can write this letter.

To Brian Townshend.

LABOUR EXCHANGE, LEEDS.
3 *April*, 1910.

I needed my holiday in Ireland more than I have ever needed a holiday in my life. I had a great time in the mountains and bogs of Donegal, and walked most of the way there from Belfast. I took a good many notes of my observations and feel I really learned something. I went to Donegal via Derry and walked to Derry by way of the Sperrin Mountains, which I daresay you have never heard of—I had not till a fortnight ago. These mountains form the boundary between Derry and Tyrone. There is an almost idyllic stretch of peasant proprietorship

scenery just under them. I stopped at a little place which is at the end of the railway and ascended the hills from there. When I get my first big breakdown I think I shall go and live near there for some months.

The Irish home industries are a big problem. They are ruining the health of the women in many of the country districts, and what is still more serious, they cause neglect of the household work and of the children. The women slave all day and stimulate themselves on tea. The housework is left to an old grandmother—or not done at all. I am more and more certain that all work—even craftsman's work—should be done in a factory where everything is open to easy and effectual inspection. The home is not the place for work under any circumstances. I can imagine the rage of the æsthetic Socialist—and of the Suffragette—at such opinions. But these people are not seriously concerned with social organization at all.

Two general impressions have stuck very strongly in my mind. First, that the Irish peasant is ten times as intelligent as the English agricultural labourer. I went to Ireland with a prejudice against the Irish—as I am decidedly a Teuton in race and in intellectual outlook. Germany is far less foreign to me than Ireland. But I am compelled to admit that, whatever be the cause, the Irish peasant is far more alive than the labourer in any rural district in England that I know.

The second general impression was that the proportion of really beautiful women in the Irish rural districts was far greater than in the English towns. Of course this is only natural. But I have only just realized, after a couple of years in the middle of urban districts, that you hardly ever see a really beautiful working-class girl and practically never a beautiful woman. It is a horrible thought.

I get a good deal of solitude now and want nothing else. I have a good deal to reflect on. I was twenty-four last week, and I feel I have just reached maturity in the last year or so in a pretty definite sense. I have no very definite idea as to my future, except as to the immediate future, which is mainly concerned with pegging away at

this job. I enjoy life very much on the whole. The only thing which makes me a bit gloomy at times is a sort of sense of isolation. I find myself on the whole drifting steadily away from definite human ties. Most of my friendships were based on a community of intellectual interests, and as I come more and more to grips with the facts and realities of life as I see them—or think I see them—I find myself building my own tabernacle of wisdom which is invaluable to myself, but which is nevertheless so much my own that it shuts me off from the rest of my fellow-men, at any rate as far as a community of intellectual interests goes. I know that the wise of all generations have said that there is a something greater then mere opinion as a basis of human ties. I think on the whole that they are right. W. B. Yeats says somewhere that opinions arise out of necessities of organization, while ideas arise—I forget his exact phrase, but I think he means out of life itself direct. And Gilbert Murray and Edward Carpenter and all the writers I love best are always talking about these beyond-intellect phenomena. But my life seems more and more destined to be closed to them. I care more for the State than I care or have ever cared for myself, or for any other human being. Almost everyone that I know is prepared to expound his political creed in a few sentences; they have their dogmas, which are be-all and end-all to them. But I have lost all my dogmas, except a passionate faith in the development of a collectivist spirit in relation to property and breeding. I know what Carlyle means about swallowing all formulæ. And I feel I am separated from those who still have their formulæ, their party loyalty, or their sectarianism as their final philosophy. I know that truth is not in these things. I know that the basis of most political as well as of most religious enthusiasm is that it is more enjoyable to believe than to probe. But it is not well for a politician to feel this. And in spite of the wise of all generations I cannot restrain myself from feeling of this man or that with whom I once walked in intimacy: "Oh, but he still clings to this party cry or that academic generalization. I cannot bear the trouble of a wrangle with him."

JOURNAL POSTED AS A LETTER TO MRS. TOWNSHEND.

NORWAY.
May, 1910.

When one's holidays are limited to twenty-one working days in the year one learns to be economical with time, and ingenious in the disposition of it. The funeral of the King occasioned the closing of business for an extra day in Whit-week, and by some chance inspiration I decided on Thursday 12 May to go to Norway for a week.

I sailed from Newcastle at seven o'clock. The red-brick houses along the riverside of South Shields appeared exceedingly picturesque in the evening light, but I was not destined to enjoy the pleasures of the beginning of a sea voyage for long, the swell off the mouth of the Tyne soon compelling me to retire below. I was sufficiently well on Sunday morning to be able to read Baedeker and some novels. I finished Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree." It does not possess the substance of "Tess" or "Jude the Obscure," but it contains an extraordinarily subtle and interesting study of a woman. The conflict between ancient customs and modern, or rather nineteenth-century, habits is presented in a double guise—in the life of a woman and in the supplanting of the old church orchestra by the organ. The subtle interweaving of these two *motifs* appears to me very beautiful. Although there is no expression of *opinion* on the writer's part at any point, yet each strain is made, by allusion and suggestion, to throw light on the significance of the details of the other. The study of the typical peasant characters is carried through in Hardy's best style.

On Sunday afternoon the breeze died down. I was able to sit and enjoy the sun and sea on deck. I made some progress with McDougall's "Social Psychology." His analysis of the nature of instincts is very clear and seems to me to be sound.

I wrote a long letter to J. A. D. I value his friendship very highly. His character always brings the epithet "heroic" to my mind more readily than that of any other man or woman that I know. Both in his activities and in his limitations he is one of the most essentially *English*

men that I know. He is one of the very small minority of Englishmen who make our forms of Government actually workable in practice. But this minority does not consist of a small number of men of genius. Those who compose it are distinguished from other men by qualities which I think may be justly termed ethical as opposed to intellectual. They possess a more developed civic sense and a larger amount of patience than the mass of mankind. Were it not for them English representative government—and especially local government—would sink beneath the accumulated weight of pettiness, ambition, and greed to an infinitely lower level of efficiency.

In the evening I wrote a long letter to M., but I felt a sense of futility about it. Reason cannot touch standpoints rooted in personal sentiment. One of the melancholy reflections which has been haunting me for some time past is that affection appears inevitably to distort insight into realities even in the strongest intellects. John Stuart Mill's estimate of his wife is one of the strongest cases in point. I suppose the " mystic " would answer me by a rhapsodical statement to the effect that my estimate of the nature of reality is an arbitrary one—that it is just as reasonable, or more reasonable, to regard Mill's estimate of his wife rather than the world's estimate as " true." Such a statement would in actual life merely have the effect of causing me to lose my temper in sheer annoyance at the tomfoolery to which the will for happiness leads men. If I retained sufficient coherence, I should reply that in the eyes of all reasonable men—even including some " mystics "—this argument does not affect the case where affection leads astray an estimate, not of the personality of the object of affection but of external facts. And it is perfectly patent to me that this frequently does happen.

This conflict between affection and insight into reality seems to me one of the most tragic things in life. Why should affection, whether or no it includes sexual attraction, be inseparable from illusion? I am convinced that this is so in the vast majority of cases in spite of the " mystics' " talk about loving *because of* defects (analogous

to *credo quia incredibile*). I would rather know the answer to this mystery than to any of the other riddles of life. I have no faith in the "mystics," because without exception they profess to reveal a ground of optimism or meliorism behind the veil. The unanimity is too suspicious. "The wish is father to the thought" explains half of the philosophies and nine-tenths of the religions—at any rate of the religions of modern Western civilization.

Perhaps Thought can never be emancipated completely from Will. As Balfour is always pointing out, Thought is, biologically and sociologically speaking, merely the tool of Will expressing itself in the evolutionary process. Thought aspiring upwards independently and for its own sake is a mere bye-product—a sickly growth—containing within itself the seed of decay, and doomed to be cut short or gathered in to serve the purposes of Will. But why —why—why? Though the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is tasteless where it is not bitter, though Love and not Beauty or Truth is the only pure foundation of happiness, yet were I a second Faust faced with another Mephistopheles, I would give all the scanty impulses to Beauty and Affection that I do possess for the answer to a single one of the riddles that haunt me. It may be a fool's bargain, yet I know I should be doomed to make it. There is a curse on some of us.

. . . . .

The memories of all triumphant inspirations fade away. The notes of the "Siegfried" *motif*, of the ride of the Walküre, of the onward march of the "Symphony Pathétique" are drowned. The steady, reiterated knock of the Fifth Symphony seems the last word of all—the throb of the heart of the world.

I do at the present moment definitely believe that Fate rather than God is a better conception for the basis of a faith. Herein I find myself differing from most of my contemporaries. Wells says in "The Discovery of the Future" that science tells him that Man is destined to extinction in the course of time by the general reversion of the solar system to a nebulous condition, but that he does not—cannot "believe" that or regard it as a

possibility. Now, my habits of mind do not prevent me from regarding it as a possibility. I am not a convinced meliorist. I believe ultimately in an unknown destiny. I do not want a rational basis—a cheerful-faced belief in cosmic progress—as a basis for continuous effort. The acceptance of such a belief seems to arise generally from a desire to give an appearance of simple intellectual consistency to human life. In the last resort most people are meliorists because it is more pleasant, more stimulating, to be a meliorist. There seems to me to be an element of intellectual cowardice in such an attitude. It is an easy way out of moods of depression. If there are not adequate rational grounds for Meliorism, if we cannot win it by weapons of our own intellectual forging, tried steel and trusty, let us not whine for it and accept it as a sweetmeat from that lusty-limbed mistress Desire-for-Happiness, who is so jealous of all the Muses.

A man should be able to find a basis for action in the knowledge of the nature of himself and of Things which experience gives. I do not believe that History offers grounds for a belief in Progress. (I am not certain that the very notion of Progress is not based on a completely fallacious estimate of the value of different human characteristics.) I am pretty certain that philosophy provides no adequate basis for Meliorism. But when I look back on my own life, and when I consider what I regret in it, and what I accept as comparatively tolerable, I find that it is from thoroughly completed work—little enough there is of it!—that I derive most satisfaction, and for ill-conceived or half-fulfilled purposes that I feel most shame. This knowledge of the nature of my own self and of its expression is the spur which Mind can apply to flagging Will. Prove to me that the Spirit of Man shall perish, that God is a hideous gamester, that human effort is in the last resort Nature's trickery, still you cannot destroy the sense of duty felt by my conceiving mind as owed to my living—if transitory—self.

. . . . .

I awoke at eight o'clock to find the steamer in Bergen harbour—four hours before the appointed time. I spent

nearly the whole morning in disposing of my bag, and in vainly endeavouring to secure maps. The shops are all as inexorably closed as in England on a Bank Holiday. This was gratifying from the point of view of industrial conditions, but exceedingly annoying to the traveller. I spent some of the morning in the company of my fellow-countryman with whom I had shared a cabin. He was an extraordinarily gauche, nervous, crude creature. He had come to Bergen representing a firm of jewellery importers. He had an appointment with a friend there. His friend failed to meet the boat, and I never saw anyone in such a miserable fluster. His mind was of that half-educated, ill-developed type which Wells sketches in such clear and bold outlines. In our cabin was a notice relating to the proper use to be made of the life-belt, should occasion arise. Just before I left the boat for the last time I noticed that he had inscribed upon the notice in pencil, " Christ is your life-belt ; the Holy Ghost is your straps." I was reminded of the man in one of Hardy's novels who went about painting texts on barns and stiles. A queer, uncanny product. Through how many centuries have philosophers toiled, prophets preached, theologians constructed churches to make possible that writhing little abortion of a mind !

He told me that he had read Ibsen, but regretted that he could not understand the drift of some of the plays ! How is the stream of modernity to find inlet into such minds ? Probably rather through changed conditions and environment than by means of any direct transformation of ideas by ideas.

Bergen is a pleasant old town, well kept, and made especially beautiful at this time of year by the masses of light green foliage amongst the roofs. I finally gave up the project of obtaining maps and with some misgivings set off for the mountains, relying on the eighth or quarter of an inch maps in Baedeker.

It was past mid-day when I started, and the heat grew more and more oppressive. I toiled up a nameless mountain, leaving Ulriken on my right, and skirting along the pleasant lake at the foot of it. My map was hopelessly

inadequate, and I had to do the best I could with my few scraps of Norwegian in asking my way. Of course I lost the track. After a considerable amount of scrambling, I emerged above the snow level, on a sort of plateau, dotted with five or six huts, which were used as week-end residences by Bergen youths. I found four lads bathing in a pool and they set me on my way to Borge. I had a fine view of the fiords and islands from the plateau. In a few minutes I arrived at a point where range after range of snow-covered mountains inland came into sight. I was reminded of the pass between the Fusio and Ariolo valleys which I had crossed one afternoon last July. As you arrive at the summit, the whole of the northern ranges of the Alps suddenly appear. A panorama of these peakless Norwegian mountains is not so impressive as an Alpine landscape. But the sudden apparition of the series of loaf-shaped ranges stretching away to the horizon, and looking, to one accustomed to Wales and Switzerland, as if they must have been moulded and rounded and smoothed by the hands of giants, was a thing not to be forgotten.

I suppose contrast is more than anything else the foundation of the appreciation of beauty. The sudden contrasts which mountain walking offer give me, I believe, more intense æsthetic pleasure than anything else in art or Nature. I can recall half a dozen sudden revelations of landscape which have moved me deeply. I have stood while the mist has blown away unexpectedly from the heights of Snowdon, revealing wonders of sea, river, and green hills; the Ticinese pass mentioned above the turn in the road to Ulrik from Eide, suddenly revealing the broad stretches of meadow and fiord, a descent out of the mist enshrouding Mount Errigal in Donegal on a spring evening—all these will always remain for me outstanding visions in the chain of dreams that we call life. I remember on the last occasion to which I have referred when descending the blunt knife edge Errigal, the sudden revelation of the Derryveagh Mountains, and the vale that goes down to Gweedore brought vividly back to my memory that wonderful idealization of contrast in

the "Phædo"—the passage where *alternation* is made the very basis of knowledge and life, and adduced as a principal argument for immortality.

To Mrs. Townshend.

LEEDS. 15 *June*, 1910.

Thank you very much for your letter, and for the book. I will write again shortly.

I have just heard from B. that he is going to marry E. M. S. It has moved me more than anything I have struck for a long time. It is a really good thing, there is no doubt about that—a thing one can be certain and glad about. . . .

I am growing more and more solitary and gloomy week by week. Not that I am sick of life or anything like that. I only see more and more clearly that work—or at any rate my kind of work—and the art of life are two things. I am possibly tolerably adapted for the first. I am decidedly not a genius at the second. I think perhaps I want to know too much of the why and wherefore of it to do it well ever. Inquiry and practice make a very good pair of horses for purposes of work; but they do not run well together when it is a matter of life, not mere effort.

However, some one has got to inquire—which means experiment. And provided that it seems probable that a reasonable majority of people are, or may be, happy in a decent way, I don't mind much being in the minority. Anyhow it gives me more satisfaction to think that Eva and B. are likely to be happy than anything I have struck for many a long month.

. . . . . .

Work, restful sleep and meals, and solitary hills are the only solid goods I seem to have a hold on now. I think I shall concentrate on them for a time—leave the rest of life and seek peace in what I seem at least to know. Peace, by God! I am so damned tired of wrestling with facts and thought.

To E. M. S.

LEEDS. 15 *June*, 1910.

I have just heard from B. I am very glad you are going to marry each other. It is the best thing I have struck for a very long time. I have felt more to-night than I have for many long months, and I shall think of you two black-headed devils last thing before I sleep to-night.

My life becomes more and more bureaucracy tempered by solitude. I am afraid I am deficient in the art of human intercourse, or at any rate the self that is me at this stage is. I shall emerge when I have worried a few things out perhaps.

A. is staying with R—— just now in a cottage on the moors. I expect to see them in a few days.

I am really more glad than I can say. I am also very much pleased that B—— has got a job in Liverpool.

To Mrs. Townshend.

LABOUR EXCHANGE, LEEDS.

Do read Margaret Macmillan's book on "The Child and the State." It has inspired me enormously. Most of the general stuff on education, apart from the administrative side, seems to me slosh, but this is really inspiring. I can't stand these blitherers with no guts who talk about the harmonious development of personality and so forth, but this woman has got hold of some stuff. I have also been reading about the "Gruntvigian" movement in Denmark a good bit lately. There is no doubt they learned to make butter as the incidental result of an enthusiasm for the humanities, which is one in the eye both for the silly revival of apprenticeship people, and also for the people who believe that technical education is the only thing. Intelligence and (you can think me doctrinaire, radical and eighteenth-century, if you like) Reason are the essentials. (I deliberately put Intelligence, by which I mean appreciation of facts, before Reason, by which I mean the power to correlate them.) I wish Englishmen would talk more about Germany in terms of Fichte and Goethe and less in terms of Charlottenburg.

I am not against technical education, but it cannot arouse a human passion like the passion for intelligence. By God ! let us have the facts—and see round them.

I think I am going to take a house near where G. lives. I am getting to like him more and more. These chaps who work hard for the cause, when they have to earn every penny that they spend, inspire me with enthusiasm. It is all very well for plutocrats like myself, with tons of unearned increment,[1] to be Socialists. I am always all right and have fattened on the sweat of the people for years without doing anything but rave a bit. But chaps like G., who have fought their way up, and still make great sacrifice for the cause, make me feel damned humble and a bit of a fraud.

I am thinking about a lot of things now. I hope you will come and stay with me when I get my house. I have got two beds, and I will get a bit more furniture. I shall be near Roundhay Park, which is one of the few good things in Leeds.

I am beginning to see the other side of all sorts of things, which does not make me less revolutionary but more sure of my ground. I shan't ask R. to share my house. . . . I am in sympathy with her nature and with the spirit of her aspirations—at least, I hope the best of me is; but in the everyday work of life I am primarily a politician—my religion, my whole philosophy of the business of life centres round the State. Political science and ethics are identical terms for me in most of my moods. Politics is the art of life. Well, that being so, I can't stand second-rate reasoning about politics. I am too hasty to be able to live with it anyhow. And when I am conscious that all my own ideals are as nothing to her, compared with the third-rate logic about the working of political and economic organization poured out by honest third-rate thinkers, I am small enough not to be able to stand it. . . .

I have done all I could to root out anti-feminist prejudices which every man must have who is brought up in the present form of society, and I know I am more free of them than appears in my speech (the old trick of

[1] He had an inherited income of about £300 a year.

covering up sensitiveness; you are about the only person who sees through it pretty thoroughly in me—only it is not a deliberate trick as you think, it is an involuntary instinct which I hate and have sometimes wept over and regarded as a sort of curse).

Well, I don't know why I should write all this to you. Perhaps it will worry you. But I don't think it will. And if you see that I am damned wrong somewhere, I have no doubt you will make me see it, and that I shall hide from you the fact that I see it as I have done dozens of times.

. . . . .

It is interesting how the new science of heredity makes parenthood a sort of gamble with a limited number of differently coloured marbles. That is why it doesn't matter that marriage is such an accident. If parenthood is a gamble within fixed limits, it is only meet that marriage should be regarded as such too. The only thing that matters is introducing cracked marbles into the gamble. Their exclusion is the science of Eugenics. When it is really recognized that marriage is and must remain a gamble (and parenthood still remains a gamble even if real love is superadded to marriage), then men will begin to perceive their relationship to the whole human race, and society, nay humanity, will completely supplant the family as the basis of the moral emotions—or at least the ties of immediate blood-relationship will be valued mainly as symbols of the love that is a latent bond between all mankind. Graham Wallas quotes a line from Dante about the love that first set the stars in motion. It is not such rot as it seems at first sight. It attracted my attention first because I didn't understand it (I went to picture-galleries first for the same reason). I see something in it now, and I hope to read the whole of Dante some day when a moral scandal or an electoral defeat brings about my temporary retirement into the country or on an analogous occasion.

"Don Juan" is the only epic which I have ever read *in toto* so far.

To the Same.

ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL, FILEY.
Sunday, 26 February, 1911.

I am not overworking—I know how to take care of myself now—but I am working right up to the margin. I have done my duty by the State this last year and a half, and in July I am going to take a long holiday for three weeks or a month. I shall probably go to Switzerland, then across the mountains on foot, over the plains to Venice, mostly by train, by steamer down the Adriatic, and by foot somewhere into the Balkans or Greece.

I am giving up the managership of the Leeds Labour Exchange at the end of this month (February), and am going to do special work in connection with the juvenile department of the Exchange in both Lancashire and Yorkshire. This will suit me excellently. I have several ideas which I want to get an opportunity of experimenting in. I have already eight Advisory Committees in separate towns which I can use as *corpora vilia* for my experiments. If I can't get a thing done in one place I probably can in another. It is a grand opportunity.

I have also got a pretty good way in research in one or two matters connected with juvenile labour. During the last eighteen months I have taught myself the use of Blue-books, and have thrown off the old habit of reading with excessive slowness and thoroughness as if for an examination. I feel this is a huge acquisition. I cannot tell yet how far I can go in administration or politics. I know my extreme ethical individualism and my hatred of the rich and their habits is probably a very distinct bar to my going beyond a certain point in the Civil Service (and quite rightly). It may be in politics too. But not all the snobbery and bourgeoisie of England can shut me out of the British Museum! And to have realized the power of realistic knowledge, and to have attained to some extent the power of using it gives me an independence of which no man can rob me. I shall never be a broken-hearted political exile! If the worst came to the worst, I should begin again across the Atlantic. Every Englishman is a potential American—if he only has the sense to see it.

Blessed is the man who has found his work. I am happier than ever I was. In fact, when I look over my life, right back to the long, solitary fight of my boyhood, I see that each year has been almost without exception happier than the last. I think I learned a good deal through the years of isolated struggling at Winchester. No one will ever know what that meant to me. In some respects it seems so horrible now—more so as I grow older —that I can hardly bear to think of it. And yet I feel that I was storing up for myself treasure in heaven—which is *manhood* to a boy. But it might not have been so. There have been thousands for whom it has not been so, and therefore I still cling almost superstitiously to a sort of shadow of a belief in Nemesis (this happiness is too good to last) and a constant warning of myself that the gods love not too great pride of happiness in man.

I find myself getting more and more independent in spirit, more capable of enjoying life alone, less dependent on any one for the essentials of the best pleasures. I know some people denounce such individualism. I think they are mostly people who are incapable of experiencing it. It does not mean a lessening of the importance of friendship or even of love. It only means that one culls both of them instead of wallowing in them. I daresay I am incapable of the sort of passion for an individual that sweeps a man away from worldly considerations. But I know that romance is not necessarily bound up with that sort of passion. I know that my passion for moulding the stuff that binds men together in society—for becoming a part of that stuff myself, an indistinguishable brick or stone in the temple of God—is as unworldly and as romantic as the wildest lover's passion. And in my best moments I can feel the true lover's humility, in my love for Earth and Man, just as really as those who fall prostrate before Woman or Art. (The insolence of their exclusiveness ! ! !)

And I am learning to be one of earth's children—I believe I am. Nature is more and more beautiful to me. The simple natural (I defend the word) pleasures of sunlight

and sky and food—and wine to crown Life now and again with an ephemeral garland—become more and more real. The joys of bathing in winter, of running mile after mile on a moor, of pure physical love, without pretences —why, by God! why not take them all and be thankful without any quibbling? They aren't any of them everything—but nor is anything else. I am losing patience with those who are devoured by a sense of imperfection. Their standard is wrong—not too high or low, but misconceived. I stop and wonder now and again at real tragedies. Not often, I admit. I simply cannot understand them: I can only see that by far the greater part of them—the most pitiable, the least dignified part at any rate—are remediable. All that part of tragedy which is due to *human* wastefulness—I mean social stupidity—is remediable. Perhaps I shall come closer to the meaning of the other part as I grow older. I have come to understand the common, routine part of the mechanism of myself fairly well. I know it is no use my trying to live with R.—or any other woman. I get to like her and respect her—love her, if the word were not abused—more and more. But domestic life requires a certain amount of energy—like everything else. I find that with me it requires a good deal more when conducted with a woman than with a man. In the former case, too, it doesn't give me the sort of change I want from work. All this I have found; it is not acting on theories.

But I am more and more keen on having children. Joan fascinates me. I know it is humbug to say that I am shirking parental responsibilities by not living with R. every day. Perhaps I am too cocksure about my *mens conscia recti* in this respect—but it is a real conviction.

I want to have several children. I don't care about the probability that at least the majority of them will never be as consciously intimate with me as my best contemporary friends. Just as there are certain phases of one's life (in clear contradistinction to others) which one looks back over and feels, "Well, with all the tarnished portions, with all the misshapen fragments, still it was worth it," so I shall feel about my relations with

my children when (if ever) I am sixty. "I'd do it again," as William says in "You Never Can Tell."

To-day I am resting most enjoyably. I caught the 9 a.m. from Leeds to Scarborough and walked here in glorious sunshine and wind along the coast. I gave myself a good luncheon (to the frugal a half-crown luncheon and half a bottle of wine once a month is Ambrosia and Nectar—why don't the rich find that out?) and have spent the afternoon reading "Getting Married," and watching the sunlight and the sea and the cliffs of Flamborough Head. By God! life is good. It might be good for nearly, very nearly, all men.

"Getting Married" is wonderful. Damn these super-Shavian, quibbling technologist critics—with their "pure dramatic art" and what not!

There is Truth and Life in this thing. I will not wrangle over the word "play" with them—I have no time.

The sun has set now, but the cliffs of Flamborough Head still stand out beautiful in another way, and there is blue in the sky and shining clouds and grey clouds, and the hue of the sea is not colourless though no man can name it. I once heard a rather pious German professor in a lecture distinguish at length between Buddhism and Christianity as based upon *Mitleid* and *Mitfreude* respectively. We have no word for *Mitfreude* in English. But I know that though it was first *Mitleid* which lit my passion against human injustice and folly, and that fanned it during the years of my boyhood, it is more and more *Mitfreude*, becoming conscious of itself in moods such as this, which binds me to my fellow-men and to all living creatures and to the impersonal but loving forces of Nature —the embrace of the wind, the lap of the water, and the folds of the bosom of Earth.

(By the way, I am not becoming a Christian, or anything like it.)

The sky and sea and cliffs are all becoming greyer. Behind me there is a long line of white waves leaping up against a breakwater or a line of rocks which runs out from the northern end of the bay; the lighthouse on Flam-

borough Head has begun to flash, first red, then white, and then yellow at intervals.

Well, I must up and away. I have eight miles to walk against a strong gale, to catch a train at Scarborough, back to Leeds.

To the Same.

12, Roman Terrace, Roundhay, Leeds.
13 *June*, 1911.

I have been rather incompetent till to-day since getting back. It is too much for me trying to work hard and at the same time dissipate socially in London as I did last week. However, I am very fit again now, and hoping to get on with my book. I enjoy being here immensely. I have made friends with a young blouse manufacturer who is a Fabian and Minority Report man, and am trying to persuade him to come and live with me. If I could find two or three congenial men to come and share this house it would be really good fun.

I have read Olive Schreiner's book and think it excellent except that some misunderstandings of the trade unionist attitude towards women's labour rather annoy me. She, like most middle-class women, doesn't seem to realize that women's labour nearly always means labour at cheaper rates than men's labour. Where it doesn't—as in the cotton trade—no one objects to it. I have seen a good deal of the ceaseless struggle of trade union secretaries to get standard rates and conditions observed by masters. Women who come in and work for less are naturally objected to—just as men who work for less are objected to.

But I like Olive Schreiner's book immensely. I think it is right that women should feel that they are fighting for a right to share in the world's labour—and the most interesting parts of it—not primarily for a right to " self-development " or " experience " or some other anti-Puritan catchword.

14 *June*, 1911.

I am looking forward immensely to my month's holiday. I shall turn absolutely from books and towns. I expect I shall loaf about the Tirol with old Dudley for a bit,

and then perhaps cross over into Switzerland by myself. I feel I shall return with the strength of a giant.

Meanwhile I am going to take a preliminary week-end in Wales to-morrow, Sunday. I am simply craving for a sight of the mountains. I have been feeling "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" all this evening. The smell of a wet hillside and the feel of slippery rocks will be food and drink to my soul. And two nights in lonely farmhouses with dips into Meredith's poems after supper will be a vision of the far-off, unattainable peace which I always dream of but never find.

I have a sort of affection for North Wales which I think I can never lose—almost a sentimentality which I am ashamed of when I take up the map and look in a few seconds at a dozen mountains or valleys—each of which I can see almost as clearly in my mind's eye as in reality, and each of which is connected for me with an outburst of feeling in relation to some individual—I have an extraordinary sort of melting mood come over me, which I never experience except in solitude, a passionate desire to have done with the perversities of my own nature which have broken up so many loves and friendships, and a sort of vision of a *me* that exists *in posse*—and therefore as really as the *me* of actuality—a *me* which could translate into terms of, say, a long evening's talk by the fireside with each individual the most passionate feeling I ever had for him or her. Peace! I don't ask for a lifetime of it, only for an hour now and again. And yet I can't get it. I can get nearer it in general with men than with women. It seems easier to throw the spectre of practicality overboard for an hour with men, and to live wholly in the visions of the moment.

By God! I look at that map and I seem to *know* with a sort of certainty which is strange to most everyday issues that there is something more real and enduring in the love that one has felt for an individual—whatever has happened to it in actual life—than in the never-ending clangour of discords and perversities. I can see R——, in brown gaiters and a grey skirt and coat, climbing up the north side of Rhinog Fawr with me—the first time

I ever walked with her. I can see you walking with me up the Cwmbychan road by a wood—one cloudy afternoon —and meeting old Dudley with the O——s; and D. on the lawn in front of Pen-yr-alt. (I would give anything for a command over reasonableness sufficient to force myself to show and her to see—if only for half an hour in the whole of the rest of my life—that I did feel genuinely in love with her, and that what was real in that exists to-day. I can't express what I mean, it only makes a mix up in words; it is part of my idea of a sort of symposium—I mean literally banquet or gathering—of all one's loves in a triumph of reasonableness.)

Well, you see, I am a sentimentalist at bottom—so gross a sentimentalist that perhaps the assumption of a mask of ruffianism is not only explicable but inevitable. Unfortunately, the effect of the mask may be similar to that of the mask assumed by Max Beerbohm's Happy Hypocrite.

I am looking forward to your coming immensely. Jones, late of Walworth, is coming for a few days during Coronation. His company always rejoices my soul. Heron, my blouse manufacturer friend, was here last night.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
20 *June*, 1911.

I feel enormously benefited by my tramp. Had a grand day in the mountains yesterday and thought a lot. Unfortunately, I could not sleep last night except for two hours. The cause was not mental at all. I had a very good supper, including flesh and claret, just before going to bed, after tramping from 11.30 to 9.15, and this on top of a very refreshing bath made me so alert that I simply could not stop thinking. I almost wished I believed in the sanctity of marriage, then I should know what to do anyway.

> Oh what a dusty answer gets the soul
> When hot for certainties in this our life.

It is more honourable to the human spirit to live without ethical certainties when you know that really they are

all only convenient hypotheses, but how much more difficult! I should be a much better political Socialist, and much more likely to make a public success of my life, if a cursed spirit of inquisitiveness and empiricism, culminating in Tolstoy and last of all Shaw, hadn't made me attempt to probe questions of conduct to the root. But I don't think I would sooner be without that spirit on the whole.

CHAPTER V

LEEDS AND TIROL

JULY, 1911, TO JULY, 1912 (AGED 24–5)

To Mrs. Townshend.

TIROL.
Saturday, 22 July, 1911.

WE have arrived at a hotel right up a splendid valley. We left München at 8.45 this morning and arrived at a little place called Mayerhof about one o'clock. There we dined, and have since then been walking up the valley. I am writing on a hillock facing the snow mountains, and just above the river. Zemmerthal is the name of the valley, but I don't suppose you know it. I left the route to Dudley, as it doesn't seem to me to matter much where you get in country like this. As he changed it completely about four times yesterday, I gave up trying to find out where we were coming till we were nearly at the end of our railway journey this morning.

I always enjoy the long journey across Germany from England. There are so many things to see, even when one is rushing through a country in a train. I travelled most of the way with a Dutchman, and knocked some of the rust off my German by talking for several hours with him about the Flushing fortification question, the draining of the Zuyder Zee, the Dutch education problem (the religious question seems very similar to ours), the Dutch East Indies, the strikes at Rotterdam and Antwerp, etc., etc. It seems that many Dutchmen accept the idea of ultimate incorporation in the German Empire with equanimity. I think they are right, and I think England should recognize the situation. Surely in the interests of civilization we must have one central authority from

the North Sea to the Mediterranean. It won't extinguish local culture and local sentiment. Holland would be just as well off, it seems to me, if she were in the position of Bavaria as she is now. The incorporation of Holland in the German Empire would mean, of course, (1) that Prussia would no longer have a majority of votes in the Bundesrath (unless this were juggled somehow), (2) that the whole strategic position as regards English and German relations would be revolutionized. Of course the ordinary Englishman would say, "We can't have a German Fleet within five or six hours' sail of the English coast." But it seems to me that the proximity of the German Navy would render some understanding inevitable. The position would be so intolerable that it could not last.

It is useless for Radicals of the J. A. Hobson type to go on talking vague internationalism without definitely trying to consider what Germany wants and what is the relation of her wants to the general interests of civilization. I think Germany should be recognized as the Power which is bound to become the administrator of Central Europe —in so far as a common centralized administrator is necessary.

Of course government isn't, and never will be, more than one of the main interests of civilized life. The Germans and the English can govern pretty cleanly and pretty well as things go. We must to a certain extent think in terms of good government. Liberty is the first essential of good government. But it is no more than that The problem of the administration of Central Europe appears to me as primarily (not wholly) expressible in exactly the same terms as the problem of the administration of Greater London. I don't know enough to speak confidently, but I suspect that the growth of specifically Bavarian art and literature in the last generation has been actually helped by the unification of Germany. It seems to me simply muddle-headed to say that local culture is necessarily stimulated by complete political independence.

Dudley and I talked about a great many things in a very short time with Bonn, the head of the new Münchener

Handelshochschule. He has the typically Jewish mental qualities, but he is remarkably shrewd and well-informed.

We lunched yesterday with half a dozen German students —of the type who despise the duelling man and are altogether much more like Englishmen. One of them had his mistress with him—a most beautiful girl with masses of black hair and very dark eyes. I am told that there is very little prostitution as we understand it in Munich, because the mistress system is so much more general.

The hours of work of Munich waitresses distress me very much. We got some figures from one girl. Apparently no one, even amongst Socialists, has taken the question up. The Socialists seem to be almost wholly occupied with questions of general principle and imperial policy. They have not found their Webb.

(It is nearly dark, and I must go in. The mountains in this light are wonderful.)

I was immensely surprised to hear Bonn speak of the lack of public spirit in Munich just in the same way as I do in Leeds. He said that most of the members of the City Council go in with a view to their own interests without any direct jobbery. Very many are small shopkeepers. The place is well governed, but the chief motive is really to try to attract rich visitors and residents who can be fleeced by the trader and tax-gatherer. (Munich is really a residential not an industrial town.)

To the Same.

FRANZENSFESTE, TIROL.
Tuesday, 25 *July*, 1911.

Thank you very much indeed for your letter which I have just found here. I had been looking forward to arriving here not least because I hoped for letters. Yesterday morning, after Dudley went off to Scherzing, I lay out on the grass outside the Dominenshutte, looking up the valley at the glacier and the snow, and read a most fascinating pamphlet on German Kolonialpolitik by Bonn, whom I met in Munich. He has specialized in colonial questions, and my slight knowledge of South Africa enables me to recognize that he is probably abler in his treatment

of them than any one we have in England. I have never seen such a mass of ideas on colonial questions, substantiated by skilful reference to facts, within the compass of fifty pages. I really think it ought to be translated into English, as a contribution towards the understanding of Germany by England.

. . . . .

The main ideas of the pamphlet are as follows :—

The German colonial movement started in the early eighties, when emigration from Germany was at its height. Then the principal German possessions were acquired. The main idea was to find an outlet for Germans across the sea where they could remain German citizens. But since then the following facts have become clear or emerged :—

1. The German colonies can never contain a white population of all grades of society (most interesting references are made to the conditions prevailing with regard to the competition of white and coloured labour in Algeria, Queensland, German South-West Africa, and South Africa).

2. German industry has developed so enormously that German emigration has practically ceased. (Bonn might refer, though he does not in detail, to the enormous immigration, both seasonal and permanent, of Italians and Poles into Germany, especially in the building and mining industries and agriculture.)

3. The most serious problem of German industry in many ways is the rising price of raw material, e.g. in the cotton industry (this is of course true of industry all over the world).

Whether or no Germany can be made to include a still larger population depends on—

1. A continued supply of cheap raw material (and food—Bonn, like Brentano and Lotze, the great Munich economists, is of course a strong Free Trader. Tariff Reform probably does not include the ablest economists among its adherents even in Germany).

2. The preservation of her present opening of new markets.

With regard to (1) the first of the real functions of Germany's colonies emerges—to supply cheap raw material for German industry. Of course they provide very little now, but their population is 14,000,000, and they could be made to supply a great deal more.

With regard to (2) (perhaps the most interesting part of the pamphlet deals with this), Bonn assumes that the countries to which Germany exports will offer less of a market in future owing to tariffs and the growth of local industries. Germany can take three possible courses to deal with this problem.

1. She can try to force foreign countries to open their markets by means of war. No doubt there are plenty of hard-headed fools (Bonn says in effect) who would like to try this. But such a method is utterly impracticable on account of the boycott. Whatever treaty were made with a conquered Government, it is impossible to conceive a conquered people at once beginning to buy sewing machines, cloth, etc., from their conquerors. The possibilities of the boycott are too great. (An interesting limitation of the economic man theory.)

2. She might try to conquer a part of the incompletely settled districts of the world where whites can live and bring up families—e.g. South America or Australia. Bonn does not absolutely dismiss this as a possibility. (He evidently regards his Government rather with the feeling that they are fools enough to try anything.) But his own policy is—

3. To stimulate the wants of native Africa by a humane and civilizing policy towards the natives and so create a new market. There is room for an almost indefinite extension of consumption in Africa, and it is not likely to manufacture for a very long time, if ever. Bonn is no sentimentalist. I should not even call him a humanitarian. He is an almost callous Jew. But he riddles the brutal extermination policy of the German Government in South-West Africa with economic criticism, contrasting it again and again with our more humane policy in South Africa. He points out that there are more licensed white traders in the tiny Trankei territory [1] than there are traders in the whole of German South-West Africa in spite of the infinitely larger native and white population in the latter.

Incidentally, you might as well, it seems to me, apply the extension of the consumption idea to the home proletariat, who, as Money says, are very bad customers so long as they are badly paid (see Hobson too). But if only we could make people see that the raising of the standard of native African life is intimately connected with our own economic interests it would be a great thing.

[1] A Cape Colony native reserve, where no white man may trade without a Government licence.

Of course, in a sense this may be anti-Socialist—stimulating the property sense, etc. But I am afraid the tribal system is doomed. I am also very suspicious of any idealization of primitive man (or woman). And, after all, civilization is one, and the black man, though he may be saved a good many of our zigzags along the road to Utopia, is not going to have a private Utopia of his own.

. . . . .

Yesterday afternoon I crossed the pass into the valley leading to this place, which is on the Brennerbahn and the main road from Innsbruck to Verona. Just after I got across the pass there was a thunderstorm, and it began to rain. (The rolling echoes of the thunder in the mountains was glorious.) I had coffee at one Gasthaus and beer at another, but I did not like the people. The first Gasthaus was really only a Bauernhaus. There was a plague of flies, and also a wench who was grossly seductive. So I came away. About an hour later I went into another Gasthaus. Here they were very uncivil, said they had no more beds, and could only give me supper if I liked to wait an hour. The tourists here were a damned lot—quite different from those in the valley we went up first, because in this second main valley there was a cart-road of sorts. There was a yapping party of German women, who grinned at me because I had on an English mackintosh, the likes of which they had not seen before. On such occasions I preserve complete outward composure, and carry out my policy of showing how well Englishmen can behave even more strictly than I usually do, but I boiled tremendously within. So I walked on two hours more through pouring rain. The valley was not very beautiful, but I enjoyed the swish of the rain in the birch-woods and the noise of the swollen river. About nine o'clock I came to a Gasthaus which was very pleasant, though the wench here also was rather free—perhaps they are all in that valley. Here I fed and slept. I had thought of crossing the mountains to-day, and arriving here by a roundabout route. But instead I went straight on to Sterzing. I just missed the ten o'clock train here, but I am glad I did, as I found a swimming bath where I had

a glorious hour. A number of Germans were bathing *en famille*. (Whoever started the idea that mixed bathing stimulates lust? People have no right to start these ideas except on a basis of realistic psychology.) After my bathe I strolled round Sterzing very leisurely (the sun was very hot). There was one jolly old street, with lots of cool vaults and arcades.

. . . . .

I have read your letter several times. I am so glad to hear about Joan. The main thing I shall care about in connection with her future will be to do all I can to enable her to have a definite place in the world's work. Of course it will be much easier—she will, in fact, be able to do it entirely for herself—if she has brains. But it is even more important that she should find her place in the world's work, even if she hasn't. I should imagine, at any rate I hope, that there will be less need for general vague woman agitators in twenty years' time, and therefore she ought to start from the first with the assumption that she will do something definite. But God forbid that I should ever infringe my own principles to the extent of attempting to mould a course for any child of mine. I hope I know the weakness of well-meaning parents well enough. Perhaps I even under-estimate their value.

To the Same.

VERONA. 31 *July*, 1911.

I have enjoyed myself hugely to-day, trying to let myself feel the influence of Italy with as little positive exertion as possible. The chief thing I did this morning was to climb up the Castel San Pietro on the farther side of the river, whence one has a view of the whole place. There I lay in the shade for nearly an hour thinking of the history of Northern Italy and many other things. The fact keeps forcing itself on my mind that this place is about the size of a third-rate Yorkshire manufacturing town—say Rotherham, or the enlarged borough of Dewsbury. I suppose it was as large, or larger, under the Roman Empire (the Amphitheatre seats twenty thousand).

Does the fact of a great past really influence the lives of the great mass of the people? I doubt it. I don't see how it can till we get a national minimum wage and an eight-hours day. And I doubt whether history has ever been really an intimate consciousness for the mass of the people, except in so far as they felt the effects of war or devastation. The things which really are important for them in history, e.g. sanitation and industrial changes, they have not realized simply because historians are only just beginning to take any notice of them. But the day will come when the history of main drainage in England will supplant the study of Crecy and Agincourt, when Chadwick will oust Wellington as a national hero, and the youth of England will know more about the Municipal Corporations Act than the Comitia Centuriata?

The Roman Republican Constitution is about the most futile to select for study by boys—there might be some point in studying the Athenian. Even if the contention of the ordinary Public School head master or classical don be admitted—that a non-utilitarian study of the classical politics and classical literature should be the main element in education—still their methods are absolutely unjustifiable.

How the devil is anyone to understand what the Comitia Centuriata, the Ecclesia, or the Boule were like if he or she has never seen even a public political meeting? An Italian has recently written a book on Cæsar, showing that he really climbed up by being a first-rate caucus manager. Probably the average Public School master has never attended a ward meeting of the local Tory or Liberal caucus—or ever read his Ostrogorski. What is the good of trying to understand the dead politics of another age if you don't look at the monuments of the living organism of which you are a part? Whether an understanding of the past or a practical reform of the present be your main object, your method must be the same—*see and feel* the actual thing working. It is perfectly easy to do so: in every village the machinery of public affairs in the Parish Council, the Rural District and County Councils and their officials—local school managers, etc., etc.—moves on day

by day. And yet we can find nothing better to stuff the minds of boys of fourteen with than the dubious details of the Roman Constitution. *Lieber Gott in Himmel!* It is enough to make one weep. And then we wonder at the lack of interest in public affairs—yelp against the party system instead of reforming parties (which must exist) from within, as the Americans are doing so successfully, or grow pessimistic about democracy generally. The sacrifice of intelligence in the Public Schools is openly justified in the supposed interests of the production of political capacity, but no one tries to give any attention to the specifically political education of the mass of the people. People only seek to find some dodge—proportional representation, the referendum—which will counteract the effect of political ignorance, the study of civic institutions, local government, the caucus, the Civil Service, and Parliament. The average boy or girl may be too foolish or too divorced from the facts of life (owing to his parents) to understand the interest of these things. But then a lot of education has got to remain drudgery until all teachers are Egerias. And facts about existing government are as good for the average boy or girl in his or her teens as any other facts. Some of them will stick and bear fruit in the mind when the boy or girl comes to read the newspaper or vote, or be asked to join a political organization.

The Amphitheatre here is a wonderful place; part of the arena is occupied by a circus, and acrobatic erections, and advertisements of Velma milk chocolate! I suppose it is really not suited to most of the best modern sports, it is not big enough for running or to start aeroplanes from. What a pity it isn't a theatre! There is a Roman theatre here, but it is much smaller and more broken, and also has a church in the middle.

Italy interests me tremendously, but one cannot pick up any but the most superficial sociological information by casually staying here, and I don't allow myself to humbug myself that I am more interested in churches and pictures than I actually am. I did not like the cathedral here as a whole nearly as much as several English cathedrals—of

course it is utterly different. But there are some little Romanesque colonnades and a little Basilica which are very pleasing. I wonder the cool of the churches doesn't make them more popular. I don't know if Roman Catholics are beginning to justify their practices by the argument that their physical effects induce good spiritual results. I was much amused by a young High Church Socialist friend of mine justifying fasting on hygienic grounds. If I were in Verona I would use the churches as an alternative to the public baths in summer.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
7 August, 1911.

I have been reading a book on Italy by Bolton King and Okey. It is very good and interesting in view of the events of to-day. Last night I did not turn to my ordinary work, but read in a textbook of modern history the story of the Franco-Prussian War, and the outlines of diplomatic history since then. I feel more and more the utter *irrelevance* of diplomacy to the real needs of people, and the absurd gullibility of the whole of us—the utter absence of the elements of reasonableness in foreign affairs. What does it all matter to the proletariat and peasantry of Europe? They want good government, reasonable organization. They have no interest in these silly squabbles over precedence and national honour, which themselves bear no necessary relation to valuable traditions and noble sentiments. And yet the feelings of Frenchmen and Germans are perfectly intelligible after the history of the past centuries, and in particular the last fifty years. Vernon Lee's letter in the *Nation* was interesting. I am glad she raises her voice against this damnable Anglo-French Entente. I don't feel cocksure about my idea of the expansion of Germany. Of course the curious thing is that Prussia does not want Germany to expand in Europe, because she would then cease to be able to out-vote the rest of Germany, and the Dutch and Austrians would certainly be on the whole a peaceful and liberal force in the Empire. I don't feel so wrathful against Italy over the Tripoli

question as most English people, especially Liberals, seem to be. I think North Africa has got to be brought within the sphere of Western European Government, and I don't think the muddle in South Italy is an adequate reason for stopping Italy if she wants to have a share in the job. On the other hand, I doubt if she can afford it. It will probably cost the Government a good lot, and reading about Italian poverty is horrible. It seems probable, on the whole, that the Italians will do better for Tripoli than the Young Turks. I expect angry letters from Liberals in the next *Nation* if any one troubles to go on with the correspondence.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
14 *August*, 1911.

. . . I am in a queer mood, not dismal but rather solemn. I feel I am growing so confoundedly old, or rather experienced in life. I have lived through ten years in the last two. I know I am almost a different man from what I was when I came up here.

One of the things which I can scarcely understand is the extraordinary clearness with which I am able to see my own mistakes, even quite a short way back. I think there must be something queer about the relation and functions of intellect and instinct in me. Sometimes I seem to use intellect when most people would go by instinct (or convention), and sometimes, though less commonly, I trust to impulse when most people would calculate, or probably not act at all. I feel I don't know what I am turning into. I know if I once get a sure grip on life and a definite direction I have enormous powers, which have to a large extent been frittered away, or at any rate spent in gaining experience during the last four years.

I feel at this moment a sort of confidence that I shall eventually find a fairly clearly defined life-work, and that it is only natural, my character being what it is, that I should have twisted and turned a bit for a few years. If that is the case I know I shall not regret these years, because I have certainly become wiser in them than if

I had been in the, to me, far happier (and in a sense more "natural") state of a sort of *élan* of work-inspiration, steadily, ceaselessly, remorselessly, pouring down like a mountain stream with whirlpools, waterfalls, and side pools, but no stopping in the main.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
18 *August*, 1911.

Thank you very much for your letter. I have not written because my mind has been very full of many things in a confused way, and I have been much more devoid of definite impressions than I generally am.

I thought of coming down to see you by the excursion train on Sunday, but it is doubtful now whether the trains will be running again, and in any case I think perhaps I had best stay and work. I have been getting on with my book slowly. I enjoy life most when I am writing it now. The warring of ideas and impressions in my mind when I am not at it is troublesome. Marion Paris, at the end of her last letter, wished me peace of mind. I suppose I shall get it again some day, but it seems far off now.

The strike is magnificent. Nothing else really matters. It is strange to see things in Leeds, crowds of railway men in the streets, most of them extraordinarily solemn and sober men, in their Sunday clothes, just as you see them in an Adult School or a P.S.A. meeting, very English. By God! there is good stuff there, for all its dumbness and slowness. Of course they are an extraordinary contrast with the dockers. They are never unemployed, and the dockers are chronically under-employed. At dinner-time I saw detachments of Lancers come out of one of the stations through a large crowd. Hundreds of soldiers have been sent into Leeds. There has been hardly any disorder, or even horse-play, but a lot of successful picketing.

In one of the Liberal Christian epochs of my youth I used to offer up prayers to God with a mental qualification, "if He exists," for the sake of honesty. I feel as if I could almost pray now in the same way for the strikers. It

will be an awful thing if they are in any way defeated. I think the Government have not done so badly on the whole. Of course one doesn't know if they are pressing the companies to recognize the Unions. It is ridiculous that they should not. They are not Gods Almighty any more than the Engineering Federation, the Shipbuilding Federation, or the Coal Owners' Association, and all these have fully recognized collective bargaining. In a way the Government guaranteeing to get food through may help the strikers; it means that an absolute panic cannot arise, and the cessation of passenger traffic and coal traffic is enough to paralyse business and industry. I am not sure that the strikers would not be wise to let food through, and rigidly exclude everything else. . . .

It is awful to feel one can do nothing personally to help in the struggle. If it were really Civil War, would not I be at the barricades? But, alas! one has to be content with the invisible bond which unites one with the cause of humanity. In a way this reminds me of the years of my boyhood, when I had not a single friend who thought or felt as I did, and yet I felt that I was bound to those who were working for the cause, though I might never know them, and learned to be satisfied with the consciousness of unity.

God help the strikers, if there be a God! In any case, they must help themselves.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
25 *August*, 1911. 7 *p.m.*

I have sworn to get three or four hours a day at my book, but I will just write a few lines to you before I begin. I am feeling very happy to-night. I feel that it is a great thing to have discovered that I have some power of writing, and enough intelligence and instinct for detail to enable me to do research of some sort in sociology. It is a sort of sure resource. I feel that whatever happens to me in the course of the next few years I can always turn to that as a means of expressing myself in useful work. I don't think I get more steady and solid enjoyment from anything

than from gradually collecting and sifting material, and finally shaping it into a form which means some small addition to the world's knowledge, however small an addition it may be.

I have got the scheme of the second chapter of my book clearly thought out, have nearly finished the first sorting of the pile of notes, and shall begin writing to-night. . . . I am going to try to get Lord Henry Bentinck to ask a question in the House about using postmen for the distribution of newspapers, so as to do away with the labour of wage-earning children. I think the P.O. might do it at a profit, and yet at a cheaper rate to the newspapers than the retailers. Of course the retailers would object, but if the newspaper-owners were on the other side they would not matter so much. . . . I enjoy working here, facing the sunset, hugely. To-morrow I shall work at my book most of the afternoon and evening. On Sunday Heron and I are going to cycle out from here to the moors and then tramp all day. By God! I have more than my share of the good things of life externally. I daresay I have been slightly less happy than the average on the whole, but I have a lot to be thankful for. One needs regular work for so many hours a day to appreciate the simple blessings of life—food, light, and air—most keenly.

Sunday morning, 27 August, 1911. *8 o'clock.*

I must just scribble you a few lines while I wait for Heron to come down to breakfast. I have got my old green coat on, which is the colour of the earth and smells of a hundred moors and hills. We shall be setting out shortly for a day in the wilds. There is a glorious view as you descend to the valley of the Wharfe, about four miles from here. We shall cycle along that road to the edge of the moors and then walk. I have been up since about seven repairing my sofa, of which the bottom has entirely burst. By driving in three great blocks of wood across the frame I have obviated the necessity for re-upholstery and rendered the sofa a sort of symbol of the social organism in its botched-up grogginess.

. . . . .

I expect you will quarrel at the phrase "illusion of free will." But I have been a convinced predestinationist ever since I was a boy, and my convictions were strengthened at Cambridge by the arguments of the best philosophers. It doesn't make much difference which view you take to questions of practical conduct. But it makes a little difference as regards one's attitude in certain situations. Had I lived in the seventeenth century I should have been a fine old Calvinist.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
28 *August*, 1911. 9 *p.m.*

I have been too sleepy to do any work to-night, partly as the result of a lot of cycling yesterday. We had a great day on the moors, and a bathe in the Wharfe. I read your two papers on Zola in the evening, and liked them immensely.

Yes, that stuff of Bergson's is good, and I expect it is wholly right. And yet some of us have got the devil in us to such an extent that the doctrine of self-expression can't form a complete ethical code. There may be too little of it in me, but there is also too little of the power to root out. I don't suppose I could ever make any one else—not even you—understand what I mean, except by writing a history of my life as full as Rousseau. I believe I *could* do that, but I don't expect I ever shall; my work lies in other directions. And yet it may be that salvation might be found by nourishing the human so that the devilish was extinguished unawares. I don't know. I don't expect I ever shall know.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
5 *October*, 1911.

I didn't get your letter till late last night—after eleven o'clock—as I was at Huddersfield in the evening. Miss M. is going to put up a fight against the Board of Trade about her marriage, and I shall back her up in any way I can. I have got little or nothing to lose as far as position

and reputation go. I am also trying to help an agitation for higher pay for our clerks. The worst of it is they are all hoping to get the next vacancy in a higher rank, and are scrambling against each other for it, and don't show a proper spirit of combination. Most of the managers care too much about their own positions to lift a finger. However, S. and I are going to back the clerks. I wish we were still under Churchill. By God! that man makes good speeches. I didn't agree with all he said at Dundee, but he was jolly good on the national minimum, and of course the right to strike has got to be given up for that —it's worth nothing except sentiment (and that of a bad kind), if you can get better machinery.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
8 *October*, 1911.

I am fair sick of things to-night—damned miserable with a filthy sore throat and about fifteen things which occurred simultaneously to worry me to-day. However, I have just read a jolly story of Conrad's ("Youth"). I feel I have got *youth*, which is not a matter of age really, and it will take a damned lot to down me. When I feel a bit sick, it is generally as much due to being tired as anything. I often think of the dog's life I led for five years in my boyhood. At any rate, I shall never go through that again, and I know that my future depends as much on what goes on inside me as on what goes on outside; and if "freedom" means anything it means that—and behind freedom there is Fate, offering eternal satisfaction to those who have courage to conceive it.

I am sick of the silly injustices which are caused by the inadvertence of the comfortable. I have written a letter to Miss Clapham to try and get a woman clerk, who is being disgracefully paid, a proper salary. The letter reflects on my divisional officer, and if Miss Clapham feels she cannot regard it as private (which she well may), I shall be in the hell of a mess. However, the mess which I should be in would be no worse for me than penury *is* for that woman. So what matter? And be damned to

the possibilities! I will not try to be discreet at the expense of such generous emotions as I do have—though I could do with a good deal more discretion in other directions.

Must sleep.

Good-night.

PS.—The woman clerk is *not* attractive—I haven't spoken to her half a dozen times, and shan't half a dozen times more. No risks in that direction. I thought you would think there were. Anyhow, she won't know I wrote.

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
10 *October*, 1911.

. . . I am coming to place my friendships with women on as high a plane as my friendships with men. It is a change which has been coming gradually in my outlook. I feel the meaning of the equality of woman with man far more than when I was a good deal louder in my advocacy of it. I don't know why—but I feel the inner part of me has become enormously humanized in the last year. I don't think I ever had such clear vision of my own weaknesses as I have at the present minute. I feel I have done practically nothing to justify the huge debt I owe to society, and I see the past chiefly as a waste of intelligence and energy due to stupid uncontrolled impulsiveness. I don't know whether a man ever remedies such faults by seeing them. As far as I can make out few men do see much of their own faults, or ever get a glimpse of themselves as others see them. I am more and more astounded at the childlike simplicity of men of forty. I see again and again that they have never analysed their own motives as bitter experience is causing me to do now. I don't feel superior for it. I never felt so humble since I left school as I do now. As a boy I had many vices, but very little conceit. I haven't been overwhelmed with it at any time, but I have certainly had too good an opinion of myself, or at any rate acted on the assumption of my own importance too much of late.

Arnold Bennett has given me a different sort of insight into individuals to that which I learnt from Wells and Shaw and Galsworthy—and in many ways a more profound one. I find myself continually reminded of the external limitations which narrow the lives of the vast majority of men and women, and half ashamed of the matter-of-fact way in which I accept my own freedom. I think again and again of the limits set by material circumstances in the lives of the clerks whom I see and talk to every day. They will never be able to play with life as I have played with it. And yet they give disinterested enthusiasm to the same causes which I profess to follow —how much more honourable than mine. Yet I don't regret much of the past—very little of it. I think in many ways with my headstrong and blind impetuousness I might have done a good deal more harm both to others and to myself before I came to a sense of the fatuousness of much of my methods of procedure. I believe there is some chance that I may have enough will power to make a better business of life, both for others and for myself. . . .

To the Same.

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
15 *November*, 1911.

I have had a great fit of energy lately, owing to that tramp on the moors, and owing to running in the early morning. I ran a mile or two at 6.45 yesterday. To-day I got up at 5.30 and ran two miles. It was nearly pitch dark, and I came a frightful whack off a grass bank on to a road and tore my hands and knees a bit. However, I have got a couple of hours in at my book since.

That London job question has come up again, this time semi-officially. I don't think I shall take it, even if I could get it, which I am not quite sure about. I don't believe much can be made of it for many reasons, which are difficult to explain. You don't realize my weaknesses as well as I do. I am not so tremendously good at administration itself, though I have more ideas as to improving it than most administrators seem to have. The two functions are not the same altogether.

To the Same.

MONDAY MORNING IN THE TRAIN.[1]
19 *November*, 1911. 8.45 *a.m.*

I certainly have had a jolly good time, talking about social reform the whole time. But I had no idea —— was so wealthy. The stupendous amount of expenditure which goes on in his place absolutely appalled me. By God! it is ridiculous that people should spend money to this extent. —— is a very simple chap, and no doubt it is simply a matter of habit with him. He would be just as happy with a dinner of two lots of food as with one of six or eight, only the six or eight just go on. We all went to church on Sunday morning. It is the first time I have ever been to a service in a village church for twelve or fifteen years. I see they have altered the Litany. We now pray for Parliament as well as the Lords of the Council and the nobility. The whole atmosphere in church was just what I remember as a child so well. Every one in his own proper station: the atmosphere which I revolted against, inspired partly by Matthew Arnold and partly by eighteenth-century equalitarianism, and hating Bladesover like hell. Bladesover gave me hell for five years at Winchester, and I shall hate it to my dying day, though I can exempt individual Bladesoverites from my hatred in a way in which I could not and would not a year ago. —— is a good ally in the fight against "the dark Satanic mills" (we were reading Blake together last night).

. . . . .

I always enjoy talking about Yorkshire people with Bagenal. We both have a deep sense of being aliens in the land, and are both irritated by the frequently ignorant self-sufficiency which we believe the Yorkshireman has more than any other type of Englishman.

. . . . .

I think too much of the governing class atmosphere would be bad for me. I feel I cannot get close enough to the facts with which I am trying to deal. It is so

[1] After a week-end visit at a country house.

hard to catch the atmosphere—the subtle interaction of administrative machinery and personal character, to bear constantly in mind the subjective point of view that is necessary, as well as objective induction, to a truly scientific sociology. No doubt the objective facts are enough for the average social politician, the average administrator, the average sociologist; but I want to widen and ripen my experience and cultivate my subtlety of perception so much that I shall feel instinctively the subjective significance of every Blue-book fact. At present I am more and more conscious of my shortcomings in that respect. But I am not going to exaggerate the importance of the subjective point of view. Only ideally I feel we should treat all facts from both. The real struggle in the sociology of the future is not going to be between the inductive and deductive method—that battle is over. The battle is going to range between the claims—frequently exaggerated—on both sides of the objective and subjective methods. Psychology is the new rival of objective induction.

It seems to me that nothing is harder than for a man who has been brought up in one stratum of society to realize the differences which different economic circumstances make in the attitude of men in other classes towards the elementary facts of life. Many people with burning social sympathy never realize these differences. (I doubt if Shaftesbury ever did. Lloyd George does to some extent—almost every man who has really lived in different classes does, unless he forgets, which they sometimes do in the most extraordinary way.) How many people who quite rightly advocate raising the school age by a year realize that the immediate effect is an income tax of 2s. 6d. to 6s. in the pound on most working-class families, as the Webbs point out? But one advocates the raising of the age much better if one really has that in mind all the time. Coming into Leeds . . .

The following six letters on Factory Legislation under Home Rule are addressed to Miss Sanger, Secretary of the International Association for Labour Legislation (British Section).

LEEDS. 30 *December*, 1911.

Many thanks for your letter. Can't you make the Executive take some action soon—or some members of it—as well as circularize all members? Are there any Irish M.P.'s you can approach? The question has been so little discussed that I think hardly any one understands it.

I think it was that man, H., who used the argument to me that it would pay England if Ireland sweated its workers, in accordance with the pure theory of international exchange. You know I hate him.

LEEDS. 4 *January*, 1912.

. . . The Government and Redmond have more or less made it clear that they require Irish Home Rule as the beginning of Home Rule all round. Welsh Home Rule seems to be coming very close to the views of practical politics, and Scottish Home Rule is not much behind. Personally I am a specimen of that *rara avis*, a pure-bred Englishman for an indefinite number of generations back, and in my lower moments I have hated the alien Scotch, Welsh, and Irish, who in certain ways keep England from coming to her own. I am very keen on English Home Rule, and I hope that English people will soon begin to feel the necessity for it. But what I was going to say before this digression is that I think we may argue on the assumption that Home Rule all round is coming, and that makes our case a good deal stronger than if an Irish Parliament alone were contemplated.

As regards the average Liberal, the great thing is to get into his woolly head that the details of federal schemes are—or at any rate should be—a matter of political science and not of Gladstonian sentimentalism.

By the way, in the course of researches for my book on the Medical Supervision of Juvenile Workers I came across a speech of John Cam Hobhouse's in 1825, which gave as a precedent for factory legislation an act regulating the hours of shipwrights' apprentices in Ireland. I am hoping, when I have finished the book—I am in sight of the end now—and when I can get to London for a bit, to write some stuff about various points in the early history

of factory legislation, and this is one of the things I want to look into. It would be interesting if one found that it was an act of Grattan's Parliament.

There is a lot of interesting stuff about the early history of the Factory Acts which hasn't been brought to light. There was a man called Thomas Worsley, of Stockport, to whom I should like to erect a statue. He was a cotton and also a silk weaver, and ultimately a shopkeeper in Stockport. But he was also a champion amateur factory inspector before the official chaps came along, and conducted seventy prosecutions altogether. In Bradford I found an old pamphlet in which official factory inspectors were advocated on the analogy of the protector of slaves who had been appointed in the West Indies.

I have just come across a case of a girl of about thirteen sent by the Labour Exchange to a shop, who has been told she must work till 11 p.m. on Saturdays. This, of course, is an infringement of the law (Employment of Children Act, 1903). We have sent several cases to the Town Clerk, but nothing gets done. I am getting a bit sick of being an impartial Labour Exchange official, and I wish I could go in for wringing some of these devils' necks sometimes. The Aire and Calder Canal Company makes untold dividends, and pays its casuals in Leeds 5d. an hour, and absolutely casual work at that. They paid 4d. till recently, but two strikes have brought it to 5d. Then there is the Post Office. I got Lord Henry Bentinck to ask a question about their casuals. Samuel admitted 4½d.–6d. an hour was the wage, and "did not propose," etc. And I have to remain dumb. It is jolly hard. But it is no good doing anything. I have just been hauled before the General Manager of the Exchange for agitating about our clerks' wages—and accused, absolutely unjustly, of generally "fomenting discontent." The discontent did not need any fomenting, thank God! I only made a speech at a meeting of Labour Exchange officers, but all the men in better-paid positions, except two others, ratted like polecats. Sometimes I think I shall commit one blazing indiscretion and go burst. However, this is not to the point.

NORTHAMPTON.
17 *January*, 1912.

I sent for Basil Williams' "Home Rule Problems" (published by P. S. King and Son, 1s.) the other day to see if any of the writers had anything to say about Home Rule and Factory Acts. The whole scheme on pp. 8 and 9 seems to me singularly ill-conceived and impracticable, but you might note the suggestion that Royal Assent should be specially received for the case of Factory Acts.

Pease has written me that the Fabian Executive, except an objectional minority—probably obstreperous feminists of the pernicious type—approve our ideas. He has been asked to consult MacDonald and other Labour leaders and report.

I see the Bill is not to be produced till April. If this is correct, it gives us a bit more time.

LEEDS. 21 *February*, 1912.

Many thanks for your postcard. The idea is apparently spreading. I have written an article on the whole question of the enforcement of Labour legislation by local authorities and by provincial authorities in the foreshadowed United Kingdom federal system for the *Women's Industrial News*. I have asked them if they don't want it to let me have it back soon. I rather wish now that I had tried to get it into one of the regular monthly reviews.

Has the idea of trying to get an Imperial Bureau of Labour, jointly supported by the U.K. and all the States and dependencies in the Empire, ever been mooted—on the lines of the U.S.A. Bureau of Labour? It might be a good thing to bring the public opinion of the Empire to bear on the laggard Governments, and it would get people into the habit of thinking internationally, or at least in inter-State terms, about Labour legislation. The Tories might possibly be keener on it than the Liberals. The Bureau should issue an annual Report on the Labour legislation of the Empire and its enforcement, and undertake special inquiries. It might even be given some administrative power in connection with the negotiation

of international treaties and proposals for securing uniformity of Labour legislation in the different parts of the Empire. If there is anything in the idea, might we not try to get it brought forward at the next Imperial Conference? I have just written to Miss V. R. Markham, who is very keen on imperial questions, about it. I also just alluded to the idea in my article referred to.

There might be something to be said for the Bureau having its headquarters in Canada, but I am not sure about this.

LEEDS. 3 *March*, 1912.

. . . I think the critical point in your revised draft is the last sentence of the second paragraph, which implies that the United Kingdom Parliament should be debarred from legislating, except "in matters of international importance."

In point of fact, if we take the ground specially on that, as I said, I think we are almost likely to do more harm than good to the general cause of centralization of Labour legislation. Leaving out of account for the moment the general devolution question, it is really a piece of bluff for us to pretend that to allow Ireland to make her own Factory Acts would debar us from adhesion to treaties; because Ireland would simply be in the position of a colony —having power to adhere later if she liked.

The international aspect of the question has really been, in my mind, all along mainly—not wholly—a stalking-horse for covering up my general dislike of decentralization of Labour legislation on other grounds—namely competition as within the United Kingdom, and generally keeping back of Labour legislation within the United Kingdom.

I presume the British Association is concerned, not only with the international question, but also with the inter-State question as such (cf. your note on the activities of the American Association in the last *World's Labour Laws*).

Professor Morgan's articles on the Home Rule problem in the *Manchester Guardian* have been excellent. Have you seen them? If you like I will send you them. I

have them cut out. He has seen the difficulty in connexion with Labour legislation, and I think, by his tone, takes our view. But the main point which he makes is that we must bear in mind the whole devolution problem in dealing with Ireland, or we get into hopeless constitutional muddles. I think it would be well to insert this point in the memorandum. Redmond has accepted this view incidentally. If only one can make people see it, it may do something to clear some of the drivelling Gladstonianism out of their minds. The general principle of Home Rule is a matter of sentiment in a sense—though also of logic and reason. But the details should be settled wholly by the aid of political science and not by appeals to Gladstone's beastly ghost and general slosh about the principles of nationality and faith in the noble character of the Irish people (all of which I will willingly swallow after dinner, but not when it comes to working out a scheme in the real interests of the whole country).

I am inclined to think I should alter the phraseology all through, so as to make it apparent that we have in mind a general scheme of devolution ; e.g. at the end of paragraph 1, I should say, " . . . any serious lack of uniformity between the Factory Acts of the different portions of the United Kingdom." At the beginning of par. 2, I should say, instead of " Irish Parliament," " provincial or State Parliaments." And so on all through.

Also, I think I should insert after paragraph 1 a non-party declaration, somewhat as follows :—

" As a non-party organization the B.A.L.L. is not concerned with the general merits of the question of the desirability of Home Rule for Ireland, or any other portion of the United Kingdom. But it wishes to point out that certain special considerations enter into the question of the division of power between the Central and the proposed provincial or State authorities in connection with Labour legislation, and it desires that both Home Rulers and Unionists should deal with these considerations on their own merits."

I think the Unionists might well object to the first words of your second paragraph as being practically an assump-

tion that the general principle of Home Rule is right. Of course! I am a Home Ruler and a Liberal. I am wondering now whether you perhaps mean "inter-State" by "international." In any case I should like to delete the phrase and substitute something like this: "in cases where close commercial competition or adhesion in the existing or projected international treaties renders uniformity of conditions desirable."

Might it not be a sop to Cerberus to throw in my point, that where, from the nature of the business, inter-State competition does not arise, it is both reasonable and desirable that regulation should be in the hands of the local Parliament?

Another line of advance would be simply to ask that the Welsh and United Kingdom Parliaments should have co-ordinate powers of Labour legislation, except that the local Parliaments should not have power to cut down any United Kingdom minimum now or hereafter established. This way of putting it has the merit of simplicity.

I don't think we could really justify all we are asking simply on the international argument.

That is why I want to get the other point in. But if they will only have the international argument, I would personally rather have nothing said at all by the Association, in which case I shall promptly intrigue with Unionists and give them all the powder and shot on the subject that I can. I am too little of a party man to feel bound by party ties in a matter of this sort. . . .

I am thinking seriously of clearing out of my official position. I have got just enough to live on, and I am wondering whether I could do more outside. Is there a really large scope for research and propaganda on Labour legislation on one's own, do you think? I have thought of trying to get a factory inspectorship for a few years so as to get experience, but I am afraid the Board of Trade would give me a bad character and stop me getting to the Home Office, even if I could obtain the post otherwise. There is not really a great deal I can do in my present job, and it takes an awful lot of time—long hours—and ties me up. I have been thinking for a year, on and off, of

devoting myself wholly to comparative Labour legislation and writing a book on the principles and practice of Labour legislation; taking all branches of the subject and all countries, showing how the theory of free contract and inalienable rights of private property has actually been replaced, as the basis of society and of security, by the national minimum and communal provision, and how each form of such State interference and provision actually works in different countries. I want to get the idea of private property as the main and only basis of security out of people's heads. Anton Menger saw the fallacy of the common juridical conceptions more clearly than any one else I have ever struck, except perhaps Shaw. The psychology of the thing also wants tackling—the fallacy of the common notion of "independence." But I must apologize for all this irrelevance. You are probably too busy with practical things to bother much about theory.

7 July, 1912.

The Fabian Executive, as the result of my prodding, have been hammering at this question. I am trying to get them to issue an official manifesto on the question, but I don't know whether they will. They have been in communication with the Labour Party, and Pease could tell you exactly how the question stands now if you inquired. I understood that the Labour Party rather changed its mind on the question, but then found the Government and the Irish quite obdurate, and so decided to do nothing. But if the Government and Irish are united, the Labour people could vote against the Bill without fear of defeating the Government. I think it is desirable to make as big a protest as possible, even if there is no chance of getting all we want, (1) because if the Home Rule Bill doesn't go through it might influence the form of a later Bill; (2) because it might influence either a Conservative or even Liberal Government on the question of making its next big Factory Act applicable to Ireland, even if (as in Germany) the Irish officials were left to administer the Federal Act.

To Mrs. Townshend.

NORTH-WESTERN HOTEL, NORTHAMPTON.
18 *January*, 1912.

I was rather bored at the prospect of having to come down here, but it has been very interesting, after all. I must say I always rather rejoice at getting out of reach of the Yorkshire lingo. This is not my own country, but the manager of the Exchange here is an East Anglian, and I detected my native twang as soon as I met him. And, by God! the girls here in the streets are a brighter and better dressed lot than the lasses that are belched out of the mills of Leeds and "Oodersfield."

I rather had the idea that too many people were "looking after" these Juvenile Advisory Committees, but I find things here in an awful muddle. The poor devils have never been given any ideas, but with a little whetting they quite begin to thirst for them. I am going to see various people here to-day to try to stir things up. The certifying surgeon is the Mayor, and is ill unto the point of death, so unless he dies or recovers rapidly it is difficult to shift much in that direction.

I went to the local "Palace" last night and was by no means bored. There was a troupe of Chinese acrobats, who were quite amusing. Only I always have a feeling that Johnson's dictum on performing dogs applies equally, or perhaps even more, to performing humans of that kind. I wondered what they thought of Sun Yat Sen and the Republican cause.

A very comfortable little temperance hotel was full, so I only had tea there and slept at this pub. I am never really at ease in English pubs. There is a glib etiquette which I can never catch. However, I drank bitter with a commercial, who explained to me the way to get non-excised whisky after legal hours in every town in Scotland, and boasted of smoking smuggled tobacco. I was very affable, but the sense of the State was vaguely aroused in the back of my head. Apparently you go up to any constable in Inverness or Aberdeen and say, "I'm stranded." He says, "What's the pass-word?" You say, "I've a

friend outside" (or whatever else it is in that particular town). He says, "Twelve paces behind me," and takes you to a private house where you get a tumbler half full of neat for threepence. Tobacco is passed from Dutch to French fishing-boats, and thence to English, but you cannot get it in the Portsmouth and Plymouth area just now as the new lot of coastguards have not been corrupted. Obviously it was mainly the fun of *doing* the State, as you might do a customer, which delighted this man. It ought to be curable in the next generation by means of education.

I even got as far as chucking the barmaid under the chin. But the great difficulty about barmaids is what to talk to them about. Of course if one could come across one of the Trade Unionist barmaids in London it would be all right, but I cannot get the sequence of smooth-greased sentences to drop out which is necessary with the ordinary barmaid. I always think of what would have been a good repartee four minutes afterwards. I am not so bad at a sort of sledge-hammer repartee with my friends, but I cannot manage barmaids.

PS.—It is a defect.

To the Same

ROUNDHAY, LEEDS.
31 *January*, 1912.

I think you are grossly unfair in saying that Webbites (a beastly word) have no use for Morris. There is no doubt that the only path to well-being for the vast mass of the population is along the lines which Webb shows us —whatever may be the case for little aristocracies and coteries of one kind or another. But conviction as to the practical necessity for this course of political action is neither here nor there in regard to the broad humanism of Morris, which is open to all who believe that property is dissoluble, and closed to all—whether they are peers or peasant proprietors, or commercials, or upholders of co-operative production—who accept property and the family as the basis of things. That is the only line of division that really matters politically or sociologically, and how few there are who are truly on our side of it! I have often

been struck with the number of people who have passed through the Fabian Society. Few people have enough courage to be Socialists when they understand Socialism. Most of the avowed upholders of Socialism would abandon it if they understood it, while a true understanding would likewise bring us many willing recruits—of whom, by the way, in reading his book, I feel sure that Holmes would be one.

. . . . .

To the Same.

On Train to Leeds.
25 *March*, 1912.

By God! I have enjoyed this trip to London. I feel younger and more full of life, more human this morning than I have ever done in my life. I always revel in a long railway journey, a long flying glimpse of towns and men, fields and trees that makes me feel

> Mein Acker, mein Acker,
> Wie herrlich weit und breit!
> Die Welt sie ist mein Acker,
> Mein Acker ist die Zeit.

There are few happier men on God's earth than I this morning. I enjoyed seeing R. immensely. She is splendid with that little beast. She has agreed to register him as Bernard Sidney. After all, there is no reason why he should not be called after the two greatest men on the earth. I think he will be as ugly as his father, but he seems pretty tough, and he has a finely shaped head; I don't know if there's aught in that. . . .

I am full of Walt Whitman just now. I have not read him for a year or two, but I am going back to take a draught at that most glorious spring.

W. won't stick in the City long. He will perhaps come lumbering with me next spring. How I look forward to that! Rough, even sordid hardships, but a delving at the roots of things.

> Oh, the joy of a manly selfhood!

I have been thinking of Matthew Arnold's poem. I forget what it is called. I think its theme is introduced by a young wanderer at Circe's shrine, where he describes how

it is the poet's tragedy and triumph to suffer with all men. Perhaps the artist does really do that. I don't know. Sometimes shadows seem as good a basis for emotion as realities. But, anyhow, I must feel the earth with my own hands, feel the sweat actually flow, see the problem with my own eye, talk face to face with the toilers before I can get the impulse of aspiration and active driving genuinely, irresistibly. I believe it is so with most men if they knew it. I would make the highest official share the work of the meanest clerk or executive officer from time to time. How easy it is to lose touch with reality ! The problem of keeping it is mainly one of human education, but it can also be solved partially by contrivance. Make the chiefs spend a fortnight each year in carrying out their own orders. But men fear the Comic Spirit too much for that at present. Yet in reality she can be our saviour. It is not yet regarded as cowardice to fear her, yet some day, when the baser forms of cowardice are extinct, it will become the normal form of cowardice to fear to plunge into the icy pool before her shrine. Yet now to do so, to approach her readily, to seek her converse and inspiration is often taken for a barbaric whim. What fools these mortals be !

Perhaps, after all, the plutocrats and Gog Magogs will be laughed away, not hung (though hate is too strong in me to enable me ever to cease from willingness to hang them). . . . I am just passing a new line which is being made. I do want to heave a few barrow-loads of dirt out of a railway cutting. I wish I could swing a beetle like those chaps you see breaking up an asphalte roadway: three men in succession strike an iron wedge which a fourth holds up—chink, chink, chink.

Life is a game. If you lose the sense of adventure in it, the attitude of readiness for adventure, the sense of the fun of sitting on a large orange springing through space, you have lost the most precious thing.

But this is not the proper mood to go back to work in. I shall do something dangerous, tweak the nose of some Leeds plutocrat and expound communism to him. I must cool down.

To the Same.

DONCASTER STATION.
1 *April*, 1912.

Have run down here this afternoon to see my divisional officer. It has been a pleasant windy, sunny afternoon. I had time to look over the huge new offices which they have established for the insurance work, and also to stroll round the church, owing to a return train to Leeds being off.

What I have seen with regard to the nature and growth of official machinery gives me furiously to think. Not that I am becoming anti-collectivist in any way, or that I am up against officialism in general. I was merely irritated over an incident when I saw you last. Only I feel it is necessary to realize the more or less inevitable actual psychology of the whole matter and devise means of guarding against its disadvantages.

I hear that S., having to report upon the desirability of "establishing" or promoting the two hundred officials in his division, took home two hundred forms and scribbled remarks on each of them in a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon absolutely casually. Now here is a man of average kind-heartedness who is absolutely devoid of any sort of social or civic sense of justice, and who is incapable of realizing that £10 per annum with a salary of £60 or £70 may mean all the difference between tolerable happiness and soul-damning penury, and also absolutely devoid of any qualms of conscience in respect of the waste of public money by appointing or retaining or promoting people who are not only useless but a positive hindrance to and drag on the service. Now, some of this is a matter of intelligence, or the lack of it. But some of it is due to the atrophy or lack of the development of certain aspects of the moral or æsthetic feeling. It is obvious that this last is remediable through education, whatever may be the case with regard to intelligence. The Public Schools do develop a certain kind of sense of honour, which, on the whole, I consider thoroughly bad in relation to modern life in modern England, whatever may have been its merits in India or Africa fifty or twenty years ago. McKillop thinks Graham Wallas may do great things in regard to

the psychology of officialism on the Civil Service Commission. Perhaps he will.

I didn't feel at all angry with things this afternoon. I was in one of those rare moods of illumination, or at least I think I was, and coming away from the church I had a few moments of the sense of the vanity of things (which is not the same as a feeling of the desperate futility of things), and thought of Spenser's lines :—

Which makes me loathe this state of things so tickle, (*A lovely word "tickle!"*)
And love of things so vain to cast away,
Whose flowering pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.
Then 'gin I think of that which Nature sayed
Of that same Time when no more change shall be
But steadfast rest of all things, firmly stayed
Upon the pillars of eternitie
That is contraire to mutabilitie,
For all that moveth doth in change delight.[1]

Doncaster is, of course, a very different place from the North-West Riding towns. You get the Lincolnshire curved red tiles (are not they called "pantiles"?). They say it is going to have a population of 200,000 in a few years, as the new coalfield develops. Some steps are being taken with regard to town-planning. . . .

By God! England is a fine place, and I believe I enjoy the spring more and more every year. Even this flat colliery-ridden district between Leeds and Doncaster is beautiful to-day.

Italy will be wonderful. How I envy you the journey! But I suppose you won't go by the Rhine and Gotthard that I love so much.

To the Same.

LEEDS. 9 *April*, 1912.

I have only time for a short note to-night. I have had an enormous clear-out of letters and papers to-day. I have chucked lots of stuff into a pile to be sent to the

[1] "Faërie Queene," VIII, 1–2; "things" in first line should be "life."

School of Economics library, have sorted masses of papers and pamphlet boxes, and sat down to work through a pile of arrears of letters, determined to clear it off and avoid arrears in future.

The gale continues here, but there has been bright sunshine nearly all day. I walked round the top of the park before I had breakfast, and again this evening. The top of the park has become to me like the Backs at Cambridge, a regular place to go to for peace and reflection and general enjoyment of things. I felt rather lonely and despondent for an hour this evening, but I set to work to put a lot of sunflower seeds in my garden, and forgot all about it. But I wonder now and again whether I do chuck away half or three-quarters of the best things in life. I feel such a lot of my energy runs to waste, and I cut myself off from such a lot of good things. And yet I suppose it is good for each generation to have a few maniacs like me who insist on trying experiments in life in one way or another. On the whole I make a fairly good business of it as compared with most men. McKillop was struck with my domestic arrangements, and said that I had all the really essential things for comfort. So I have. I have never enjoyed my physical surroundings in all my life more than I have my house up here. Cambridge was too luxurious, in spite of sporadic sleepings out. It is good for a man —a male particularly—to realize now and again the nuisance he is to the rest of mankind, by doing his own dirty work. I admit I don't like it permanently. I have looked after myself and washed up and kept the place fairly clean this holiday, while my handmaid is away. But, of course, A. really does the thing much more honestly, in helping to look after his kids and in doing odd bits of housework. Honestly, I do occasionally want Rachel and the kids very badly. But I know that I simply cannot work most of my moods into the necessary conditions of existence with a wife and children. You can't ignore them when you feel inclined, and I, at any rate, have never been able to accept them as part of my normal self. I suppose that is the trouble really. Ideas, conceptions, intellectualisms do largely determine the direction that

is given to human feeling. Once get a man by unconscious acceptance of tradition, or by intellectual effort, or by chance knocking up against an idea and being fired by it, to take a certain standpoint as his normal standpoint, to twist the stuff of his life in a certain way, and he will fight for that particular *modus vivendi*, habit of thought, like hell.

I have been unwillingly forced to see the parallel between my family life these last two or three years and my home life as a boy. There is no getting away from the fact that the same motives are at work. I see myself doing exactly the same sort of things as I did ten or fifteen years ago with the same sort of perverseness or burst of wildness, inexplicable to myself, often a sudden sort of internal snarl. I used to feel as a boy that another woman than my mother might have helped me to get over that kind of mad, savage perversity, or at least have brought it within bounds. But now I think it is more or less fixed, and I must order my life in such a way that that sort of feeling is not occasioned.

To the Same.

LEEDS. 11 *April*, 1912.

I had a delightful surprise when I returned to work on Wednesday. A large parcel of books arrived from a shop—Morley's "Rousseau," "Voltaire," and "Diderot." They were a gift from McKillop and Gordon, really far more valuable than my rough hospitality. I have read most of the "Rousseau" in the last two days. What a man! He fascinates me more and more, though I have just received rather a setback in discovering his idealization of the respectable family in "The New Héloïse." Yet it is really all of a piece with him. Morley's comments and point of view are also most interesting. I often differ from them. I did not realize that he was such an old Puritan in the ordinary sense of the word—not the deeper sense which Shaw adopts, and which I generally have in mind when I use the word.

I have always had, and have, a great admiration for John Morley. His style is glorious and a real katharsis to a vaporous-brained hermit-bureaucrat like myself.

Well, I find it hard to turn from Rousseau and Morley to the details of my work. I have had a sort of upheaval in the last six weeks, I think. Is it the spring merely? I believe I am getting more sensitive to the seasons.

I am determined not to waste myself by rolling from one bit of uncompleted work to another, though I don't see how a nature like mine can learn except by experiment. I am more than ever set on America and farm-labouring, navvying, anything. It would be still more fun if K. really would come too. We should be a rum pair. I think there must be some people, even in America, who would give us a bit of a job partly for our whimsicality.

I should very much like to hear Rousseau's music. Morley (who acknowledges assistance in that chapter from a musician) says that Rousseau was an extreme reaction against the hyper-elaborate Rameau and Lulli, the movement which led to "the austere loveliness of Gluck." I like the phrase "austere loveliness," as applied to Gluck's "Orpheus," which I heard in Leeds a few weeks ago. It fascinated me, and as I read that chapter of Morley's an hour ago, I could hear the cry "Eurydice, Eurydice!" again and again. The piece was beautifully staged, too, by the Denhof company. The dance of the unhappy spiirts when Orpheus lands was wonderfully done; the white arms rising up against the blue-black prone figures and the lithe wrestling and intertwining of bodies will always remain in my memory. Eurydice, in the company of the happy spirits before Orpheus comes, made me think of the end of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound." In fact, is there not a similarity in spirit between the two dramas all through? Perhaps the Greek origin of both the legends has something to do with it. It is also, I think, not an accident that a woman takes the part of Orpheus in Gluck's opera. Though sex-love is its theme, it is a sex-love which is so transcendental as to have almost lost its original sex character. Both the "Prometheus Unbound" and "Orpheus" represent idealized humanism, neither male nor female, but leaning if anything to the female element in man (*homo*), the *ewig-weiblige* which draws even man (*vir*), not as its complement, but as like to like.

But I am probably talking damned drivel, as I know nothing about poetry, less about drama, less still about music, and little enough about love.

. . . . .

I hope you are very happy in Corsica. There have been horribly cold winds here for a week, and I am not in the mood for cold winds.

I very much want to see Bernard Sidney (I love writing those names) and R—— again, but I don't think I can get down just now.

I am in a queer mood which is not worth £200 a year to the Government.

My Shop Hours Act prosecution comes on to-morrow, but I shan't be able to be in the court. I have whipped up the Press. I hope this ruffian gets properly and heavily fined, and well damned in the papers. I have put Y. up to ask McKenna for a return of all prosecutions by local authorities under the Shops and Employment of Children Acts in the last three years. The Home Office probably can't give it, but then it will show them up, and press home the logic of a grant-in-aid for local authorities' work in industrial regulation. Anyhow, it is rather a wheeze.

To the Same.

LEEDS. 20 *April*, 1912.

The weather has been glorious here to-day. I have not lived in the country in the spring ever since I left Cambridge, and I am enjoying the experience intensely. I think I shall sleep out to-night. I have idled most of this afternoon, done a little in my garden, and read a hundred pages of Morley's "Voltaire."

The seeds I sowed in March are just beginning to come up, except the sunflowers. I am rather anxious about them. I want to have a great forest of them round my windows. This place is infested with pet dogs and cats which irritate me. The dogs yap at my bare calves when I run in the morning, and flee when I endeavour to kick them in the jaw. All the humanitarianism in the

world will not prevent me from slinging stones at infernal, damned, and pestiferous cats which root up my seeds just when they are sprouting, curse them. The cats know no better. . . . I don't care. There are moments when a man is desperate. One particularly damned young black cat, however, incensed me beyond measure, as it thought I was throwing stones as a game (I couldn't hit it, though I tried), and ran after them, gambolling insolently. Such treatment of a member of the human race is intolerable. It reminds me of a story which Williams told me of a deputation of Manchester unemployed to the Distress Committee. The formal proceedings went on in the usual way. The worthy alderman and the co-opted ecclesiastical dignitary expressed the deepest sympathy with the poor fellows on the register. As the deputation was about to retire, however, a navvy with some dim sense of humour, which had doubtless saved him from a successful career, stepped forward and apostrophized the committee in true "navvyeze," addressing them each in turn. "As for that old lugger there, with the b—— belly, what b—— good is he?" The scene was most painful, and it was some minutes before the attendants could remove the offender. I believe the report in the *Guardian* was curtailed.

I have just bought the second volume of Rousseau's "Confessions." I only got the first in Verona, and never went on to the second. The contrast between Rousseau and Voltaire is most fascinating. In a way it belongs to all time. I mean it is symbolical. There was an extraordinarily Voltairian atmosphere at Cambridge in a certain set in my time. McTaggart, Antony Bevan (who knows all the scandalous stories about the early Christians), J. T. Sheppard, Norton, Whitehead, were all Voltairians. The Fabians (though we could not boast of men of the intellectual calibre of any of these) were a sort of Rousseauite outburst in Cambridge, though some of them, like Dalton, were still to a large extent tarred with Voltairism. Still, broadly speaking, that was our significance, strangely different from the significance of the Fabian Society in London.

Oxford people cannot understand the "*Ecrasez l'infame*" spirit of Cambridge atheists. I have never found the spirit of really bitter anti-clericalism so strong in any other section of English thought as in Cambridge. . . .

I must say—you probably will not agree—I think there is room and need for a definite anti-clerical element in society to-day, a definite set of people who attack and expose the cramping and degrading influence which orthodox theological religion can have on human character. Such an influence definitely does make life poorer, definitely does hinder individual people from facing the facts of life armed with their own inner resources.

I saw the psychology of religion of this kind at work at close quarters in my boyhood, and it was a pretty ugly business. It is not far removed from literal savage fetichism. The High Church notion of symbolism may be all right, or relatively harmless for men of fairly strong intellect, or for simple peasants. I don't know about the latter. But it causes nothing less than pernicious degradation in half-educated women living in the material complexity of modern society, and suffering from the absence of bracing realities, even of so commonplace a kind as those which an ordinary business man gets in his work.

By God! if the Suffrage movement were only out against that sort of state of life for women it would justify itself.

It is true that it is only the middle- and upper-class women who suffer in that particular way. Still, they are a large class, and potentially more important in the immediate present than working-class women as regards the influence they can exercise on history.

I send you the *Nation*. The article on Meredith is interesting. "Evan Harrington" is the only one of Meredith's novels which bored me. The fantastic apotheosis of the sentiment of snobbery seemed to me too trivial a theme; it simply did not interest me. But if this article is correct, it meant an enormous deal to Meredith, and I shall certainly tackle the book again.

To the Same.

LEEDS. 2 *June*, 1912.

. . . . . .

I have been extraordinarily happy for the last year in spite of what would, I suppose, be fairly big disappointments to some men in my official career. In fact, I am not sure that I have ever been happier in any year of my life. I think I have done a little useful work—not much, but a little; I have found out a good deal more about what I can and want to do; and I have had you to be with, think of, and write to. I certainly ask for no more happiness in life than I have had for the last year. I do desire a consciousness of a larger output of useful work and continuously purposeful effort. If I can learn more per annum than I have learnt in the last year I shall be pleased. But I feel I have not done badly as regards real growth. I suppose most other people feel the same—but it is always a very strange thing to me to contemplate the "me" of a year, two years, or three years ago, and wonder at the crude lack of comprehension in this or that episode.

I am right glad to have fired that resignation in. Almost every one whom I consulted, hoping to get useful advice, advised me not to resign, with an obvious incapacity to understand the situation. Miss Hutchins is an exception. I disagree with her sometimes, but on the whole I think her one of the sanest and most intelligent people I know.

I don't think any one who knows my inner mind could call me an anti-feminist. I think the proportion of women amongst the people whose friendship or intelligence I really value highly grows year by year.

I wonder who that woman Rebecca West in the *Freewoman* is. She interests me immensely, though I picture her as rather overdressed and fastidious. . . .

I have this house on my hands till November. I perceive that my future is very incalculable for some years. I want a small cottage in the country, within fifty or sixty miles of London, with about four rooms, as a permanent

pied-à-terre for my possessions—of which I am going to sell a lot before I leave here, but of which I think I cannot absolutely get rid. Papers will be the most important—I am going to adopt Sam Butler's ideas about books, and have done with them for the most part as possessions. Beds don't much matter. Two tables, and drawers and cases for papers are really the main thing. But if you hear of a cottage somewhere or other you might let me know—preferably near (1) pines, (2) sea or bathing water—and anyhow in tolerable walking country. I don't mind buying it outright—a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί. The more detached from neighbours the better. Anything up to three miles from a station. It is primarily for myself as a solitary occasional dwelling, so a place which would not suit a lot of people would do.

The pleasure of having a solitary dwelling-place has been so great that I don't think I will ever give it up now, though I don't mind living a good deal with other people. But the *peace* of a week-end like this!

This is a very egotistical letter. I agree on the whole with what you say about Morris, though perhaps I value leisure higher than you do. If I look back over my life in a flash I group it in four things: (1) an ugly, hateful muddle up to nineteen, which is nothing but a struggling in the womb of circumstance—in darkness; since then, (2) work and thought; (3) rest and recreation—chiefly alone in the open air; (4) human relationships. Culture as such—enjoyment of books, music, etc.—only comes a bad fifth; but I do not think it really exists apart from the others at all. But, broadly speaking, I cannot distinguish between work and play. It is all serious, even when it is ridiculous.

I like that Wilde memorial. I will try to go and see it when I am in London.

. . . . . .

I have been getting in some odd little digs at the official machine lately. I have really begun to laugh at it occasionally. Some of these people in London are simply too comic for words. When one sees them in that light it is surely time to have done with them!

To the Same.

LEEDS. 6 *June*, 1912.

I always find myself in agreement with your social ideas—and, indeed, they generally enlighten me a great deal—in so far as they are statements of general, and in a sense eternal, truths about human nature in relation to society. But I think your extraordinary power of always seeing life, or rather individual human lives, as a whole amounts sometimes to a deliberate refusal to examine certain aspects of the lives of large numbers of individuals regarded as a single problem in a detached manner. (If this cannot be done, we had better shut up our books and say that sociology does not exist.) Your attitude, in my opinion, leads you hopelessly wrong over questions like the old Labour Party's Unemployed Workmen Bill, apprenticeship, and Syndicalism. I am mainly concerned with dealing with aspects of life which for practical purposes have to be treated as a detached problem, though, of course, there is no such thing as a detached human problem *really*. I will admit a thousand times over that the sociologists like myself are constantly forgetting that their whole superstructure rests on an arbitrary hypothesis of detachment, and needs to be brought back to life as a whole. But we *must* isolate the problems temporarily to do anything with them—as practical constructive men. And therefore the bringing us back to life as a whole, though very good for us, is apt to be irritating. It is a constant reminder of our limitations—a preaching to the labouring ants of the glories of the forest. Your talk about Syndicalism is unadulterated nonsense to me as a sociologist —thinking in a flash of a cotton-spinning mill, and a dozen workmen whom I know, and estimating the amount of actual thought, or even semi-demi-conscious sentiment, there is in these strike movements (which we know, as surely as that two and two make four, would never have arisen just now and in this way if it had not been for the gold-mines and the improvements in the banking system).

It is no use your telling me life can't be divided into compartments. I don't think it is for you. But I know I am to all intents and purposes a different person at different

times—and I deliberately feel and act differently in different environments and situations. Whether I shall ever feel the need for a sort of unity of moods, which perhaps is, as you say, the most important conception of religion, I don't know. At present I am too much interested in playing and trying this and that aspect of things. (You see this, as we remarked the other day, much more clearly and emphatically developed in A., who hasn't even yet made up her mind which of her selves she is going to be. I am not as much of a kaleidoscope as she is, because I am a smaller person—but it is the same sort of thing.)

As to Syndicalism, Graham Wallas's Fabian Lecture is just about right, though it isn't very exciting. E.'s is an instance of a man being unable to pierce to the spirit of a prophet's words. His criticism of Shaw is about the most unnecessary and silly thing I have known him do. Shaw's conception and preaching of economic equality is a most valuable thing—though it may be casting pearls before swine to try to get people to see what it means now. The only things which helped me to understand it were a passage in Morris's pamphlet on Communism and one or two passages in Wells's "Modern Utopia" (though Wells would probably disclaim association with Shaw on this subject intellectually).

To the Same.

LEEDS. 23 *June*, 1912.

I have been having a gloriously peaceful solitary week-end. I worked hard at my lecture most of last week. I feel it would be a great thing to try and drive home to people's minds what all these detailed regulations mean to millions of people. You people who feel so keenly the personal factor in sociology will, of course, never appreciate the relatively unexciting conception and evolution of common rules, in the working out of which you are compelled for a large part of the time to regard men impersonally in the mass. Of course, you implicitly deny the whole conception of sociology as a science. But I think that it is possible to develop one's instinct and intelligence simultaneously in the direction of an appreciation both of the

personal problems of life and of the nature of society as a whole. At any rate, I am going to try—though I may fall between two stools.

You can do damned little that is much use in solving social questions now by divination and inspiration *alone*. The number of conceptions and combinations of them which you can play with is limited, and all the general ideas have been stated in one way or another. Equally true is it that mere conscientious compilation without inspiration won't help much. But there is relatively a good deal less of the latter method. It is more trouble and less exciting.

I had a glorious hour in the park last night before I went to bed for ten hours' solid and blessed sleep. The fields and sky are so beautiful that I pine for the greener green and bluer blue of the Alps. And I would give a good deal for a fairly long spell of a foreign atmosphere and a foreign language. I have been pretty thoroughly absorbed in the heart of England in the last three years, and though I suppose I am as English as ever a man was —in my abnormalities as well as my normalities—I can appreciate getting out of my own country pretty thoroughly.

I read about your Italian glassworkers, but I felt as Mrs. Webb said about the same thing—that I should like to see it before I expressed an opinion on it, especially as it is Italian—and one knows what a farce their social legislation and experiments of most kinds are ; I mean how different they are in reality from paper accounts—e.g. Municipal Trading and Factory Acts.

To the Same.

LEEDS. 6 *July*, 1912.

I hope to get on to my certifying surgeon's book again this week-end. I have had so many things to take me away from it lately. I had begun to wonder whether it was really worth publishing by itself, and whether I should not incorporate the stuff in my *magnum opus* on the history of Industrial Regulation—the " History of Industrial Freedom " I shall call it—for which I have now been accumulating material and notes and gaining odd

bits of useful knowledge for a year. But I think I shall finish the book. It might help to straighten out the whole administration of that side of the Factory Acts. And I think it would be good literary practice for me to have the shaping and finishing of another book on a fairly small scale before I turn to a huge study.

I spent all last evening sorting out masses of stuff which had accumulated on my table, in various pamphlet boxes and envelopes. I felt at the end of it that I have almost certainly acquired more real knowledge in the last three years than I ever could have done simply by sitting down and grinding at Blue-books without the knocking about and practical experience which I have had. I wonder if my mind is really untypical in this way. I must see, and if possible *be*, a part of any social phenomenon before knowledge about it becomes a burning reality. I don't think I could really feel what Factory Acts mean if I hadn't had three years of official work, with plenty of overtime at intervals—for all the difference between my work and that of a spinner or weaver. And the direct feeling of indignation and shame at the sweating and unjust treatment of clerks who are a part of the same administrative organization as oneself has been more "real" than the knowledge of far worse injustices through Blue-books. Then coming up against casuals of the worst type in Leeds has given me a direct vision of what a brute beast savagery society condemns such men to, by treating them with less responsibility than its cattle. All this is commonplace. And yet it exists for me as real knowledge.

I rather liked Morley's address at Manchester last week. Of course, he is old-fashioned in some ways. But he has always had a very keen sense of the relation between knowledge and life and a proper scorn of culture as an end in itself. There is a fine passage about that in his Life of Cobden which pleased me long ago. Morley's character has always attracted me. I know he isn't my sort a bit, and he would disapprove of most of me probably. But I feel he has a touch—no more than a touch, of course —of that gentle strength of Julius Cæsar.

I was wondering yesterday why the devil the world didn't

found a religion on Cæsar instead of on Christ. Of course one feels instinctively that it couldn't be done. But to me it also seems that Cæsar was a far greater personality. Of course they *did* worship Cæsar—"*Divus Cæsar.*" Perhaps it wasn't so incongruous as it has been made to appear by damned Christian scholars. Worship isn't the same thing as prayer—of course the Christian religion distinguishes between prayer and praise. Prayer is generally humbug—only a very few people have the genius for it; for the rest it is mere superstition, and, of course, the great majority of people, even in the hypocritical England of to-day, don't pretend to practise it. But praise is a much more normal line of expression. And there are lots of gods that you can praise whom you wouldn't pray to. And I suspect that the "*Divus Cæsar*" business was a matter of praise rather than prayer—the same emotion as that indulged in by monarchists who drink the health of George V, only purified and raised to a rather higher level, and on the occasions when the emperors were really great men whom one could admire (not convenient opportunists like the pharisaical Augustus), mingled with an element of genuine hero-worship.

We shall come back to pluralism as James prophesied, though anything like a Positivist calendar of great men is as farcical as the popish calendar of twenty-five thousand saints.

By the way, I might come down to your cottage for four or five days about August Bank Holiday. Would Fisher be there then? I should like to meet him.

To the Same.

12 *July*, 1912.

I have had a most interesting day in Bradford to-day inquiring about van-boys. I feel that two or three years of thinking about and working at the juvenile labour problem has given us an effective sort of grasp of it as a whole. I am more and more attracted by my idea of turning the whole mass of unskilled boy workers into a corps[1]—if only one could get the right people to run it.

[1] For details of this scheme see Appendix I.

The officers of the corps would have to be Board of Trade officials—of quite a different sort from the grade of the L.E. officials. I think they could be found—enough to start it anyway. It would make a decent alternative career for some of the University people who become teachers; there is no reason why it shouldn't be alternated with teaching work of an ordinary kind, though most ordinary teachers wouldn't do the job. I imagine that some Army or Navy officers could do it—though I detest them both in general, more especially the former.

CHAPTER VI

SWITZERLAND AND ITALY

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1912.

To Mrs. Townshend.

ZURICH.[1] 15 *September*, 1912.

. . . INTERNATIONAL conferences seem to be well worth attending. I have learned lots of things which it would have been very difficult to pick up from reading any number of reports and have made quite a number of friends. . . .

The predominance of women in the English Section is remarkable. A large proportion of the leading Labour legislation experts in English, outside the officials, are women : Miss Tuckwell, Miss C. Smith, Miss Sanger, Mrs. H. J. Tennant, Miss MacArthur, Mrs. Deane Streatfield, and Miss Hutchins. I don't think you can put any men on a par with them except Webb and Sir T. Oliver. It is a jolly fine thing, and I feel proud of my country for it. They really are a very fine set of women.

The whole International Labour Legislation movement seems to me immensely important. We are well on the way to clearing white phosphorus off the face of the earth. We have stopped the night-work of women nearly everywhere except that those blackleg Belgians have taken a time-limit of five or ten years for it. . . .

We are on the threshold of a ten-hours day for women, which will mean screwing up the English standard in non-textile factories by a precious half-hour. You need to be, so to speak, soaked in the atmosphere of factory questions to feel what that means and how much it is worth fighting for. We shall also probably get the night-work of boys

[1] He was at Zurich for a Conference of the "International Association for Labour Legislation." See Appendix II.

prohibited at the same time as the result of the official conference in the spring. But if we pull off an international eight-hour day, for men and boys alike, in iron and steel, which seems probable, that will be the biggest thing of all and will bring the international aspect of factory reform much more to the front. It is obvious that the difference between an eight and a twelve-hour day at a rolling mill or an open hearth furnace is almost the difference between civilization and barbarism. And once we get eight, we shall be on the way to six, which is already almost practical politics in the Welsh tin-plate trade.

I had a most interesting time in Winterthur yesterday, in the Salzen engineering works, where 4,500 men and lads are employed. Old Salzen-Ziegler, who took me round, is a Swiss M.P., and really a most enlightened old fellow in some ways, though the whole atmosphere in the works was a good deal too patriarchally benevolent for my English tastes. Fancy every workman taking off his hat when old Salzer came past. They don't do that in Yorkshire. Of course they really might do it there now without any harm. One doesn't mind it if one knows there is something approaching human equality behind it. But only one-fifth of Salzer's people are in unions. He evidently doesn't like trade unionism, but he really is awfully good about factory conditions and knows a tremendous lot about accident prevention and ventilation. His system of training for apprentices interested me. I got papers about it. I shall have quite enough stuff to fill up my *School Child* column from things I have picked up here, and will include something about that.

Salzer cursed the French for not carrying out their Factory Acts. . . . He says that what happens there is that the Ministry passes Factory Acts as the result of sectional pressure, but does not carry them out from the fear of upsetting other sections. I wonder if that is right. Miss C. Smith says that Dilke used to say that Fontaine, the permanent official at the head of the French Labour Department, who has been here, was the best head of a Labour Department in Europe. But I rather think that there is something in the more or less commonplace idea

that the business of the French is to give us a fine and moving expression of general principles, as old Bourgeois certainly does, while the English and Germans really work them out in detail.

To the Same.

ZURICH. 16 *September*, 1912.

I have not had any intimate talks with Germans at all here, excluding German-Swiss. The Germans in the Congress seemed rather more inclined to keep to themselves than the other nationalities. . . .

I think S. is wrong about Grey and foreign politics, though I do think it is possible for statesmen to cause a war by sheer stupidity. Perhaps most wars have been so caused.

What does Persia matter compared with the East End or the Liverpool slums? It really does look as if there were abominable iniquities going on there, but I wonder how much better they managed or could manage things themselves.

It is a queer thing that people can't see the needs and problems of civilization as a whole. I think the bottom of the business is that people like the sentimental position of calling out on behalf of some miserable little persecuted tribe, especially if you can attach the word "nation" to it. . . .

I am much interested in Churchill's speech. The idea of about six States for England is good. I think it would be good for them to have education, from University down to elementary, public health, control of water, gas, light railways, agriculture, police, housing, and, to a large extent, land. There is enough in that to keep any parliament going, and real problems too.

I cannot see any valid argument for centralizing education for the whole of England. The case for centralizing company and commercial law and Factory and Mines Acts and unemployed schemes rests on special arguments, based on the nature of the thing to be dealt with. There is no doubt that the Board of Education is to a large extent clogged now by the friction of the internal parts of its own machinery, and that it would gain greatly by being split up. It has already a special department for Wales.

I am looking forward to getting to Lugano. The one thing I do want now that I shall not get there is good music, or music of any kind. I agree with Gissing in "Henry Ryecroft" in having often felt gratitude to casual, indifferent piano players at houses I have passed, or even for barrel organs. There is some one in this hotel who plays divinely. I wouldn't mind having a wife who could play well. But I suppose that is male egoism.

To the Same.

On Lake of Lucerne.
17 *September*, 1912.

I got your letter last night and the *Nation*. I am getting a little tired of the lack of "Real-Politik" in a lot of the advanced Radical talk about certain questions. There seems to me a lack of contact with reality amongst these Radicals in connection with foreign politics, just as there is amongst Tories in connection with social questions. I am beginning to understand why we get a reputation for hypocrisy. I detest the idea of war more than ever I did, but we shall never get a world-peace organized on a basis of quasi-English parliamentary government for every blessed tribe that English Radicals choose to call a nation. I should like to see Europe dominated in politics by England and Germany acting in common, if possible also working in conjunction with America. At the same time I see that it is very hard for us to get out of the position we are in, whether we need have got there or not. There is a lot of force in Grey's contention that if we weakened on the Entente with France, we should get a reputation for slippery dealings with our friends which would make it difficult to build up stable relations with any one. So in the end I reach an almost negative conclusion, pretty well in general support, though not enthusiastic support, of the Government's foreign policy as it is, except for a suspicion that greater diplomatic skill could have avoided arousing German antagonism. The great thing is to keep the peace somehow for thirty or forty years, with as few scares and diplomatic rows as possible; that will in the end produce cessation of the waste of money on armaments, especially

if, as is almost inevitable, genuine self-government and genuine education are really developing in every country.

Realism—that is what I want to cultivate in every sphere of my thought and life in the next few years, a realism compatible with the social and political ideals which, with many tortuosities, I built up for myself in a perpetually hostile environment for the first twenty years of my life, and which I have flaunted in the face of the world with a strange mixture of futility and (here and there) effectiveness, for the last four years. A strain of fanaticism such as I have can be very useful, if you know when not to apply it. Whether or not I can learn that I don't know for certain. I am optimistic enough to think on the whole that I can, and also that I can apply it in directions where most people can perceive only the laborious and the commonplace.

To the Same.

PENSION VILLA DU MIDI,
CASSARATE, LUGANO, SWITZERLAND.
18 *September*, 1912.

This place where I have settled down is in a glorious position, on the edge of the lake, so that I can easily bathe in the mornings, and with a fine view of Lugano, San Salvatore (behind which the moon sets in the evening), and of the lake nearly down to the place where the St. Gotthard Railway crosses it. It is very cheap—only 5.50 per day. The only disadvantage is the other guests, who are about the stuffiest lot of Germans I ever struck. But except at the somewhat tedious business of dinner and *abendessen* they don't bother one. The garden is a real delight.

I have been sitting here all the morning, writing some necessary letters most of the time, and reading Goethe's Life during the rest. I have also been reading a lot of Heine's poems. How extraordinarily unlike modern Germany he is—for the matter of that, Goethe is too. I think there is a great similarity between the vices of modern Germans and of Americans—the national vices of new-fangled nationality. Self-consciousness would appear to be a defect in a society, just as it is in an individual or

(*vide* Anatole France) in a Church. We are not and can never pretend to be one " nation " in the United Kingdom; we are not much nearer being a nation than Switzerland can pretend to be. The fissure between Anglicanism and honest Protestantism is almost as great for political purposes as that between Protestantism and honest Catholicism. (It is probably bad for a religion to be too honest.) I suppose there is now scarcely a single Western European State which keeps two systems of law going as distinct as Scottish and English law, and in which there is a more marked racial fissure than between the Irish and the English. I think all this is to the good. It shows that uniformity and centralization can be introduced for political purposes in spheres where they are obviously convenient without interfering with differences in the expression of civilized life.

I like Churchill's way of stating the case for federalism very much. Were it not for the immediate political exigencies of the case—the party system, I suppose you would say—I don't see why Ulster, or rather the four Orange counties, should not be given a separate Parliament. It would be as big a State as a lot of the American or Australian States or as some of the Canadian provinces. I suppose it would have a larger population than Wales. And the sentimental desire of the Irish to colour the whole of their island green doesn't appeal to me much. That sort of political idealism is half a century out of date. The only disadvantage would be that I suppose there would be a wasteful cross-current of a " United Ireland " movement in Irish politics. The great thing Ireland wants to do now is to avoid political waste.

I must confess that I have a good deal of resentment against these accursed Ulstermen, who seem to me to be the most objectionable set of people in the British Isles, and their outrageous brutalities in the last few weeks are really far worse than anything I can think of in English history since Peterloo, or the hanging of the agricultural labourers that Hammond describes. But it is no use letting oneself be carried away by resentment over these hateful incidents. I can *understand* them, since I am myself

a good deal nearer the type of Ulsterman than that of the Irish Nationalist.

I was immensely pleased with the style of two Prefaces to Heine's poems. When I have finished the Goethe and the poems I shall try to get some more of Heine's prose—the "Reisebilder," or something. Goethe's description of his childhood is very good, though I am induced to think he reads things into it from his later life. But I suppose every one does that.

It is a fine experience to come over the Gotthard. This is the first time I have come all the way over by train in the daytime. The sharp line between Italian and German life is so striking. And yet the people on both sides do exactly the same things in exactly the same ways most of their lives. Are they really different in their natures—and if so, how? I wonder. I shall climb one or two of the big mountains near here, but this garden and the sun and the lake will suffice for most of my time.

19 *September*, 1912.

A young Frenchman turned up here yesterday. I tried him with a little French this afternoon, and found that I could just manage to carry on a conversation. He is in the French Ministry of Labour and (I presume in his spare time) is taking Law and Social Economy at the University of Paris. His chief professor is Raoul Jay, whom I saw and heard at Zurich, and he is writing a thesis on pension schemes for railway servants. We had a long talk and I picked up some useful information—though I don't think his knowledge is very extensive. Unfortunately, I haven't, as I usually do on the Continent, brought a French dictionary with me. I have hardly ever spoken the language, and my expressions must be very queer; however, I generally manage to get in what I want to say in some way or other.

I rather think this fellow is a sort of Catholic or Christian Socialist. He spoke of Jay as a Catholic Socialist with great enthusiasm, and also said that some other leading French economist—I think Gide—is a Protestant. I shall try him with Anatole France when we have another talk. This morning early I had a delightful swim in the lake.

I really think this is about the most delightful spot I have ever stayed at. The mountain of San Salvatore, which is directly opposite, has the most beautiful shape. The moon sets every evening behind it, and on the right are the lights of Lugano.

I read Goethe all this morning. It is a long and fairly solid book, but pretty full of interest. I wish he would hurry up and get on to his women though! Lewes writes about that side of him in such a damned silly way that I want to see what Goethe has to say for himself.

To the Same.

PENSION VILLA DU MIDI,
CASSARATE, LUGANO, SWITZERLAND.
20 *September*, 1912.

I was so glad to get your letter yesterday. I have been doing nothing but read, sleep, stroll about and occasionally talk here. Yesterday evening I had another talk with the young Frenchman. He showed me a lot of books he is reading for an exam. in the theory and practice of Labour Protection—just the subject out of which I hope to make my *magnum opus* in the next two or three years. It was most useful to get the names of the books and have a look at them—I might not have come across them except after considerable hunting about in England. It also interests me that they make a regular course in France out of the subject about which I intend to write. The French ought not to be so far behind Germany and England in practice, seeing that they seem to have the theory of the whole business so clearly arranged. Yet there is no doubt that they are.

I am afraid I cannot read the sort of stuff that Z. turns out with anything but irritation. There seems to me a strain of futility—a sort of civilized snarl about the whole thing—that is utterly distasteful to me. It leads nowhere. No doubt the bulk of it is true—in spite of fairly frequent blatant errors of fact. But somehow I don't see it moving anybody to any practical purpose—except a small knot of kindred spirits, who are in effect an isolated element in the community. It appears to me, for instance,

to be utterly futile to go on yapping against the Insurance Act. I don't see how any one in his senses can imagine that any positive harm is done by that measure, although any one who is not fundamentally an individualist should see that the fresh obligations which it puts on the State, and the links it sets up between the individual and the community, are obviously arranged on the basis of an imperfect grasp of the notion of social solidarity.

But take your England and your working classes as they are, and could you expect anything else except by a lucky chance such as gave us non-contributory old age pensions? The Act will do some practical good, will render the life of the worker a little less insecure, will advance social solidarity a *little*, and leaves us just as free to educate and construct on a collectivist basis as before. I don't think cavilling is an effective element in social education. It is always more profitable to teach people about fresh fields for constructive action, and take the inevitable half-good and improve it as occasion arises later on.

Just so with that stuff you sent me of his about international finance—obviously as cleverly written as it could well be by any one devoid of much real, solid knowledge of the subject. We know all that—but how can we help ourselves? There is no short cut to democracy if you haven't got some sort of real basis for it in approximate economic equality and general education, and much more widely spread State control of capital. I cannot help thinking often that the people who merely repeat the obvious objections to the social system as it is, without any sort of constructive notions based on a close contact with reality and with a continual anxiety to throw overboard the half-loaves that we get alternately with whole loaves—that these people may actually hinder progress rather than help it. I may be wrong—it is no use quarrelling with them; their cussedness (as it seems to me) is obviously the product of psychological conditions that can't be altered. So the best thing I can do is to keep away from them, seeing that I find it very hard to keep my temper in their presence, learn nothing from them, and distrust their judgment too much to accept readily anything I might learn.

Of course I know there is always a 1 in (say) 20 chance that you may get a social upheaval, and that then *I* shall be utterly out of it and (possibly, though this is doubtful) the people who always backed the 1 chance will be on top. But then it is so clear to me that the chances after all are only about 1 in 5 that they would pull anything off permanently, that on the whole I think it more civic-minded to abjure a desire for the excitement as a political lever altogether.

In short, I don't believe in short cuts, and purely destructive criticism is not much in my line. I am always instinctively thinking of how much can be got out of this or that proposal, especially if it is more or less inevitable. My personal feeling is that a man like Z. would be much more useful if he left politics alone and confined himself to the problems of individual human life in its social relations, for dealing with which his quick intelligence and sympathy obviously fit him.

I don't care to have to do with him personally, because his inability to keep certain inevitable assumptions at the back of his head seems to me to render most of what he says about the things which interest me futile, and a good part of it ridiculous. I feel an instinctive repulsion for the obsessed method of looking at things which I thought I saw in Hyndman also in a similar sort of way. Both of them obviously possess very keen intelligence, and both of them seem strangely unable to apply it to certain quarters of their assumptions. In ordinary stupid people, of course, one takes impenetrability to reason on matters such as religious dogma or common ethical notions as a matter of course. But there is something uncanny to me in a mind which possesses highly organized receptivity in most of its parts and presents an utter impenetrability in certain more or less unexpected quarters.

Well, I had rather write a letter to you about something else than all this. But you more or less flung the subject at me.

. . . . .

I turned from my German this morning to French, in order to try to pick up a few words to make conversation

with my friend more easy. I have a volume of Voltaire with me and read "Candide" coming out here. This morning I read "L'inconnu." By God! I do enjoy Voltaire. He does clear away rubbish out of the mind, though he may not give you a great deal in its place. And yet his humanity is a very large and noble feeling. It is easy to forget what uncontrolled monarchical tyranny meant in France—and even in England—in the seventeenth century, and what a very real curse arbitrary imprisonment was. I have seen Tolstoy compared to Voltaire in his moral influence in Europe, but I think Voltaire is really more like Shaw than any other great writer. (I seem to remember that Shaw quotes him a good deal in one or more of his Prefaces.) They both have that plain, straightforward, direct sympathy for humanity, and both, it seems to me, succeed in making it as rich and real a feeling as any supernatural religious sentiment. I wonder if the world as a whole is dropping back into supernaturalism just now. It is noteworthy that people like MacDonald and Mrs. Webb play up to religion in a way that Mill and Morley would have scorned to do, and which I trust I shall never do. (I don't mean to imply that MacDonald and Mrs. Webb aren't sincere, they are.) But on the whole I don't think there is any set-back. I don't set much store by the influence of the High Church people on a good number of Oxford undergraduates. All that I have met—even when Socialists in politics—are so obviously unmodern in most of their notions that one sees that they are not an essential part of the brain of society. If only the State can make itself sufficiently loved—if only people feel that they owe a considerable part at least of the good things of everyday life to it—that will be the real beginning of the end of *aberglaube.* No doubt there will always be private cults for various forms of mysticism—but the main stream of what is now religious emotion will be bound up indistinguishably both in thought and expression with the emotions of civic life, of art, and of the enthusiasm of humanity. And the degrading drivel of the hymn books, with which the minds of millions of children are still vilified and closed to finer forms of moral and æsthetic feeling, and the

nonsensical jabber of Christian theology will pass away for ever.

I have just got your post card. I don't think you will care for C—— much yourself. You always seem to me so much more anxious to find out what we can't learn from Australia than what we can. The big fact remains that we have put the minimum wage into practice through their example, and that all reasonable people are agreed that the minimum wage all over Australia has given the working classes a larger proportion of the total amount of wealth produced. Melbourne, Sidney, and Adelaide don't differ essentially from Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds in industrial organization. The Brisbane strike seems to me neither here nor there in the main practical issue—except as showing (along with one or two big recent strikes) that you can't do as much by strikes as people who have forgotten the earlier history of strikes in England and Sweden thought you could—though you *may* do a great deal. Of course, the people who want the legal minimum wage simply in order to stop strikes can make a lot out of the Brisbane business—but we are not in that set. C—— has no exciting ideas, is not a Socialist, and regards the political Socialist in Australia as rather a nuisance, in which I am inclined to agree with him, from what little I know.

I am tired of this eternal preaching of disillusionment with this, that, or the other by people who expect impossible things at the start.

. . . . .

Well, dear, I wish you hadn't put me in a bad temper by sending me that stuff of G.'s. Your letter moved me very much, but I can't get back into a decent mood now, so I will end.

To the Same.

LUGANO.
25 *September*, 1912.

. . . I am sorry I wrote ill-temperedly on Friday, or whenever it was. You know I am not a mere bureaucrat in politics. I am a democrat in all that democracy can mean in the sphere of actual life. That is why I am intolerant

of what appears to me a misdirection of popular movements. If I valued the movements less, I should care less. But intolerance is always futile, even as against the biggest fools. I know that really, but find patience the hardest of all the virtues to practise.

I am sorry the new German Ambassador to England has died. I think he would have done good work. He was a Baden man. I am looking forward to learning more about German foreign policy from Dudley. He is as anti-French in foreign policy as I am and certainly started with no prejudice in that direction.

The German professor really lays himself out to be extraordinarily pleasant to me in a more or less formal way, and I appreciate it. These people have not the knowledge of the art of life that the French have, but they are our natural allies in the business of government and organization. If only a war is avoided, which seems to me more and more probable, we are almost bound to realize that sooner or later. The idea of a war becomes more and more abhorrent to me. England has never had the ghastly experience of a Thirty Years War, which put Germany back perhaps a century. I think the French are much more likely to bring on a war than we are. The more I think about the whole business, the more I distrust them, and the idea of their extending their colonial territory while Germany gets nothing is outrageous.

I study the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which is the *Manchester Guardian* of Germany, every day carefully. The campaign for Free Trade in food in the German towns is remarkable. It seems to me the biggest blow the reactionaries have had. . . .

To the Same.

In Train to Thuringen.
4 *October*, 1912.

I got your letter addressed to Lugano last night after returning from seeing Strindberg's "Todtentanz" very well acted at Reinhardt's theatre. . . .

The Berlin papers are full of talk about the Balkans. Personally I don't feel particularly anxious for peace. I

don't think there is any chance that war in the Balkans would cause a war among the big European Powers. I should on the whole like to see the power of Austria in the Balkans extended. Austria has done a splendid civilizing work in Bosnia, and for the rest, though I am not a fanatical anti-Turk, I think these Slavonic Greek people in Macedonia could do better for themselves if joined on to the small Christian Balkan States than the Turks do for them. It is difficult to see how they could get detached from Turkey without war. The Powers simply won't take the final step apparently. See how they have kept Crete from joining Greece for so long. War in a place like the Balkans seems to me a different business altogether from war in Western Europe and must be judged by different standards. . . . I don't know why you should assume that I ignore the importance of "religion" and "art" in society, because I am rather sick of the eternal *klatsch* of the masses of second-rate people who are mainly interested in them and won't take the trouble to move for the practical steps which will get rid of the worst evils of poverty. I want to get a level of material civilization in England equal to that of Australia and to secure to every one a decent minimum. That is a relatively sordid and obvious end, I know, but it is so easy to forget it in the more exciting pursuit of the (for civilization) perhaps in the end more important movements for securing a real economic equality for women and a higher level of real freedom and culture. My work is with the relatively sordid and commonplace, and I have done for ever with the froth of my first youth, which has been very little good to myself or any one else.

This holiday really has been glorious for me. I intend to make myself as much as possible a cosmopolitan in thought and habits. Englishmen have no justifiable excuse for the mistakes due to insularity now. Matthew Arnold was one of the few Englishmen of his generation who knew something about things outside his own country, and the immense advantage it gave him over his contemporaries as a thinker on politics and education has always struck me. I have hopes of writing a study of him as a political thinker some day. He was in many respects the first modern collectivist in England.

To the Same.

Sunday, 6 October, 1912, 8 a.m.

I had a glorious walk up from Tambach yesterday evening through pine and beech woods. I do love pine woods. I would give all the vines and sunshine of Italy for one deep Northern pine-clad valley with a flat strip of meadow and a brook running along the bottom. Is the feeling atavism or merely an accidental preference in me? Zimmern in "The Greek Commonwealth" has a fine passage about the inability of the Northerner to feel really at home in Mediterranean surroundings—he says it takes about two generations for the Teuton to become acclimatized and quotes from both ancient Greek and mediæval literature. Well, I am a Northerner for good and evil, and I would sooner live in a pine wood with the said strip of meadow than in the most beautiful cultivated landscape. I love the dark green better even than the magnificent stretches of gold which the beech-woods form now.

I walked last night till it got dark, and then happened on an excellent hotel three miles from anywhere, where I had a good meal and much beer and went to bed very happy. I should have got farther with this letter to you but for the fact that I found an account of the German Continuation School Congress in the paper, containing a good deal of information about physical education in Continuation Schools. I will make a small article of about a page for the *School Child* out of this and further information on the subject which I expect to get.

I think of my work at intervals on these long walks. I happened to have the same notebook in my pocket as I had when in the Tirol, and it is curious to see how my ideas have developed. I must take two clear years to think and read and write. I feel a need for accuracy, exactness, and method in political thought, in so far as it can be obtained, and want to get rid of amateurishness in every branch of it. I believe I have described to you the moment when I was reading Shaw's "Man and Superman" at Cambridge and when the whole conception of the solubility of property and marriage came on me like a flash. It was a moment

in my life comparable with Rousseau's vision of the " Social Contract." It has been the main driving force of my thought ever since. I have used the conception as a sort of bludgeon to test the effectiveness and worth of everything else. I have often used it so clumsily that it has recoiled on myself. But now I want to use it as a wedge to prise open the sealed chambers of thought which, though possibly themselves in the main the creation of economic circumstances, still serve in their turn to enslave the souls of men. The real reason why contributory insurance schemes alone are practical politics in England, whereas in Australia the Government is simply going to pay £5 for every baby without any haggling with ha'pence, is that in England the conception of social solidarity, of the unity of the individual and the State, is relatively weak, whereas, though Australia has done very little theorizing on the subject, the people have nevertheless developed a habit of using the State when they want anything as a matter of course. (This isn't a very good example, because of course Australia wants population more than we do, but it illustrates what I mean.) Well, we have got to have a lot of theorizing and investigating and propaganda to get what Australia has got as a matter of common sense.

I want to clear off my certifying surgeon's business; then the principles and administration of Labour legislation in England generally—with a good deal of comparison with foreign countries; and then perhaps, if I have had the patience to study law and psychology as well as economics adequately, I can attempt to re-state the whole conception of the relation of society and the individual—cutting deeper in a sense than the ordinary collectivist idea or than the Webbs' National Minimum idea, because I want to analyse carefully the changes in the conception of ownership and the development of State action on behalf of the citizen as consumer as well as on behalf of the citizen as producer, in ways other than the upholding of personal property. But I am afraid you won't sympathize with all this. I can only say I feel a need to clarify my mind and try to see a bit deeper into things before I claim a right to my special share in government or administration. I want

to use the results of economics, law, and social psychology to check each other, and to both destroy much that is futile in each and perhaps construct something new.

I am now going on to Eisenach. I hope to have time to go up the Wartburg before catching the 5.13 train to Berlin, but I doubt if I shall.

I am finishing this after dinner at Rulb, a little place with some big factories where they make small metal goods and where there is a large tobacco-pipe industry. It belongs, half to one of the Thuringian Duchies, and half to another. These little Duchies appear to eke out their incomes by keeping hotels. (I have passed two Herzogliche Wirtshäuser.) At one of them, Rudolstadt, there is now a tremendous row; ten out of the twelve members of the local Parliament are Social Democrats and won't vote the Budget. The Duke has proceeded to collect it, alleging that the Constitution allows him to do so in cases of public danger, and the highest legal authorities in Germany are discussing the law of the matter.

Sunday evening. 9.30 *p.m.*

Dudley and I are on our way back to Berlin. I joined him on the train at Erfurt. I had time to go up the Wartburg, but not to go over the old castle. I should like to have done so. The Wartburg is, I suppose, the most interesting historical spot, except perhaps Aachen and Frankfort. The Minnesingers, Luther, and the early nineteenth-century national movement are all connected closely with the old hill. There was rather a good statue of Luther in the town: he was a fine old chap, but I thought of his views on women. I shall have to read more about him.

I believe you saw Strindberg's "Todtentanz." I can't believe they acted it according to Strindberg's instructions in England even at the Stage Society. They would not dare to lay sex so bare. It is a great play. Strindberg wrote a continuation to it which I have got and shall read shortly. Rupert Brooke, who is coming here in a day or two, wants to translate "Wedekind," but Dudley and I

agree that he had much better tackle Strindberg—but I believe some one is doing it—and of course it would need to be done direct from the Scandinavian. The acting was splendid. It must be an awful strain for the two chief players—they get practically no rests.

After to-morrow I shall probably get on to a little work —as the result of meeting Südekum, whom we are dining with. I didn't bother to get other introductions in Berlin, as my journey is mostly holiday, but I want to get at all the essential people in Hamburg. I shall go to Yorkshire direct from there on about the 19th, so as to save money, and probably be in London about the 25th, unless I go on to some ports in the north to see dock labour schemes— but I think I shall leave them pro tem., as my article is not due till March, and it may as well be up to date. I can't afford to go all round Hull, Middlesbrough, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Cardiff twice.

By God! the psychology of marriage is a queer thing. That Strindberg play and Schnitzler's novel and the Danish novel I am reading have all stimulated thought on the subject.

. . . . .

I hope I shall find a letter from you when I get back in an hour or so, and I am half hoping to hear from Rachel some time. I should like to carry Bernard Sidney about a bit more. I suppose he will be getting too old soon.

. . . . .

I feel I am gradually getting the hang of things about Germany in some ways. Of course, being with Dudley helps—it having been his job simply to pick up general information. This little journey to Thuringia has, for instance, given me a much clearer idea of the geography of the whole country. These Thuringian forests practically divide North and South Germany. I never understood English geography in general until I lived in the North, and even now I feel very vague about Scotland. It was splendid to be on this old primitive road along the tops of the hills and get fine views north and south. I came across a somewhat rickety great scaffolding just fifty feet

high in the middle of the forest. I think it must have been put up for military or geographical purposes. It was a fearsome job climbing up the steps on a perpendicular pole—a lot of them had been broken off; but of course I could not resist doing it, though it put the fear of God into me when I was about thirty feet up.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE IN LONDON

NOVEMBER, 1912, TO AUGUST, 1914 (AGED 26 TO 28).

BEN had said good-bye to Leeds and given up his house there before starting for Zurich in September, 1912, and after his tour in Germany, which concluded with a visit to Hamburg for the purpose of investigating the organization of dock labour there, he returned to London and, after a few weeks, took rooms in Lincoln's Inn, where he lived until his enlistment.

He never worked harder than during these months, to which most of the writing and research described by Mr. Greenwood (Appendix I) belong. He was associated, too, almost from its beginning, with the *New Statesman*, and was eventually assistant editor. " His special province on this journal " (I quote from the biographical notice which appeared in it at the time of his death) " was to deal with industrial questions, in relation to many of which there were no higher authorities than he ; the Blue-book supplement was also very largely his work."

From December, 1911, to December, 1913, he contributed, over the signature " Accelerans," a page, sometimes two, of " Juvenile Labour Notes " to a small monthly paper which, at that time, I was editing. These notes were of considerable value, and it is to be regretted that they were buried in a little-known periodical. They show the extraordinary vigilance with which he watched over any legislation, any action of Local Authorities, or any administrative slackness, affecting the welfare of the child-worker. They are full, too, of practical suggestions which he was, perhaps, better fitted to make, owing to his experience in Care Committees and Juvenile Labour Exchanges, than any one in England at that time.

Wherever he went, at home or abroad, he was always keenly alive to any new facts bearing on social questions. His letters to me teem with records of this kind, which I have often omitted as they are not usually of permanent or general interest.—E. T.

To Miss C. Townshend.[1]

36, LONGRIDGE ROAD.
27 December, 1912.

. . . Your mother was rather depressed when she got back from Birchington, but was cheered up by receiving an excellent short article on "Music in Schools" for the *School Child*, and also by the news about your getting the order for the Rockhampton windows. I also am very glad to hear about the latter. Your mother showed me the letter. I am amused that the difficulty is about the "Figure" (capital F in respect of J. C., I suppose) in the centre. In view of the many occasions on which I have been accused of resembling that worthy character, perhaps you could hardly do better than immortalize me at the same time as commemorating him by copying one of my more shaggy portraits for the window. If, as your mother says, this is generally the difficulty, you could of course get over it by catering for synagogues instead of churches. I don't see why you should confine yourself to decorating the Christian religion. Holy Moses and hoary Abraham would clearly present fewer difficulties than the other gentleman. Then what about the Young Turks? I am sure they must have started putting windows in the mosques since the Revolution. Ali and Haroun-al-Raschid would be great fun splashing over a window. When my conversion to Mohammedanism is completed, I will see what I can do for you in that direction. I might even go in for some houris with Mohammed in one of the top lights for my bath-room window in Lincoln's Inn. Have you ever tried houris? There must be a sort of Parliament House in Constantinople which could do with some glass.

I have not been up to much to-day. I think I may have got a slight chill through getting wet. I also nearly blew myself up with the damned gas apparatus in your bath-room last night, in endeavouring to heat some water for a bath. I thought I did everything all right, but when

[1] My daughter, who is a glass-painter, was in Switzerland, and he was staying at my house till his rooms at Lincoln's Inn were ready for him.

I put the match to the damned thing there was an awful crash like a taxicab tyre bursting. Two glasses standing on the edge of the bath fell over, a lot of queer dust came out of the guts of the copper apparatus, and I found myself standing on the other side of the bath-room with an objectionable feeling in the back of my throat and an awful stink in the room.

I hope the apparatus was not damaged. I did not test it, but confined my remaining energies in the bath-room to opening the window. I think the explosion deranged something inside my skull, unless that is connected with getting wet. However, one or other probably explains my flippancy.

To Mrs. Townshend.

HOLGATES HOTEL, ST. MARY'S,
ISLES OF SCILLY.
30 *March*, 1913.

I have had a very pleasant time here. I have read a good deal—Fisher's "Napoleon," France's "Sur la Pierre Blanche," the whole of Havelock Ellis on "Sex and Society," a lot of Dilke's "Greater Britain" about Australia, and some other things.

. . . . .

I have walked all round and about this island. The weather was bad yesterday—rain and much wind—but has been good otherwise. The views here are absolutely unique—at least, as far as I know. There may be something like them in the Mediterranean, but I shouldn't think there is anywhere else around the coasts of this country. The sight of a score or more of islands and rocks standing out of the water in the sunshine, as seen from the top of a hill or headland on one of the islands, is wonderful.

This afternoon I organized a party of seven people in this hotel to hire a sailing-boat. We dropped one man on Tresco, an island opposite here, and the rest of us went on to Bryker, which lies alongside it. I walked all round this island while the other five had tea, and also got some flowers, which I will send you if I can get a box.

I have a room overlooking the little harbour; the waves

break just under my window, and there are generally a lot of gulls walking or rather waddling about and screaming.

There is no one in the hotel I care for much. There is a rather rowdy lot of Oxford undergraduates with a coach, who spend a lot of money and generally behave in the objectionable manner of the rich young man from that University. The nicest fellow amongst them, however, is a peer—Lord ——. He is extraordinarily handsome and has no swaggering manner. He also seems to do more work than the rest of them. There is also a cinematograph photographer here, taking views of the island, and a Secondary School-master, who started life as a half-timer in a Leicestershire hosiery factory and got scholarships to a Secondary School and Cambridge. He really *is* the objectionable Nonconformist type. He is an interesting contrast with the Oxford men. Of course you or Sam Butler would adjudge them the better type of the two. But I am not sure which is really the better, or worse. The Oxford men cost a good deal more. I admit that their narrownesses are on the whole less narrow than his. But we want something different from either. I have aimed at that something, and I think on the whole I have failed to produce anything of real value in the way of an experiment in life—at least, anything of value to the world. I have taught myself something and I may yet produce something for the world: I was twenty-seven a couple of days ago. Looking back on life, I see that it isn't much wonder that I have done so little. There are not many men who have spent so much energy in testing rules of conduct. And I can see now—it takes a lot of energy. Is it worth it? It would be a great deal more certain that it was worth it if I had a bit more common sense than I have. I have tried so many things that a wiser man would have seen were not worth trying. However, all I care about now is finishing in the next two or three months the bits of work I set myself six months ago. I have a horror and dread of any more uncompleted work, and till I see those Employment of Children, Certifying Surgeons, and Casual Labour things in print I shall feel too conscious of my many snapped-off aspirations to be happy or peaceful. If I can do these

little things, I can do bigger things in the same and other spheres. If I can't, my only value is that of an exceedingly dubious kind of moral anarchist.

I liked Havelock Ellis's book immensely. I read all of it in a couple of days. There is an immense amount of wisdom in it. I wish I had read it six or seven years ago. But I expect I could not have absorbed it.

If I can get my work finished by or before the end of June, I shall be off to America for the summer harvesting. If I don't get on to this jaunt soon I never shall. I expect I shall come back in a few months—in the autumn. But I don't want you to talk about this to any one. I don't want to be bothered to talk to any one except you about myself and my doings in the next three months. I have got my health and comparative peace of mind back, and care for nothing but using it to the world's and my own advantage. And for once and for a short time there is not much doubt as to the identity and form of those advantages.

. . . . .

As soon as I get back from America I am going to finish being called to the Bar—another broken strand picked up. This will be useful from a practical point of view, and will also give me the knowledge of law which I need for my sort of sociological work. When I have done that I shall be in a position to try a number of different lines of work. But I hanker after a biggish bit of writing on the history of Labour legislation in England. I keep picking up odds and ends about it and storing them away.

Dilke on Australia in the sixties is interesting, though not very profound. But he gives me a good idea of the place. It interests me much. There is no doubt to my mind that English democratic progress will be along their lines. Everything points in that direction, and only a few Millenniumites will object—besides the vested interests. I am inclined to think that Australia has been fortunate in not having too much conscious Socialism among her Labour Parties in actual politics. I care less and less about the shibboleths of Socialism, and I think I like the Socialist element in the Labour Movement (except for a very small number of intellectuals) less than the other parts of it.

All we want is an infinite willingness to use the State or the municipality, or associations of any kind, for any practical ends in the direction of increasing the security, wealth, and civilization of the masses and improving the position of women. I doubt whether conscious Socialism and the preaching of it help that any more now—though they may have done in the past. The number of conscious Socialists has probably, as far as one can see, ceased to increase, though what one may call the Socialist point of view is, I should say, being accepted more and more generally. Probably a much greater increase of conscious Socialism would not really help practical Socialist methods. It would tend to throw up more dogmatists to the front—and they are a pernicious race on the whole, when it comes to practice.

In some ways I find myself more interested than I have ever been before in the problem of changing the *soul* of man—just because I never realized so much before how difficult it is. I remember Shaw once saying that the ordinary enlightened young man began by revolting against his family and general environment, but that he only began to be of use when he was able to go and live with them in peace and feel " after all we are men " (those were Shaw's words), and that is more important than these squabbles—or something to that effect. Well, I have reached that stage. Only I shan't go back to my family, because it (or rather R.) isn't the sort of thing you revolt against because of your revolutionism. If—which might well have happened—I had married the ordinary type of woman and then bust things up, I should at this moment be recruiting my health and regaining my peace of mind along with Bernard and Joan. But *my* family unfortunately represents my first revolutionary phase. I can't get back to the normal human ties through it. On the contrary, it will perhaps bar me out of them for ever, which I can't help regretting, because, as I say, I have begun to be interested in the transformation of the soul of man—and you can't transform or study transformation while you live in a different way, with different habits, from the great mass of your fellow-men. I am not growing conservative.

I am less so than I ever was. But I want to see the new grow out of the old, and do what little I can to help it in the thirty years or so of strength that I may reasonably expect. Isolation is no use for that.

Now I must stop for dinner, which I need after the sail and tramp. Good-bye. I shall be very glad to see you and the children again.

To Miss C. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN.
5 *April*, 1913.

. . . I should like to find time to write my "Case for Judas Iscariot," with an autobiographical tinge in it. You might let me have my Renan back, which I lent you. . . .

I have just been to see the children at Eva's. Bernard has grown enormously and is much more like Joan. He too amuses himself very independently, and would take no notice of Diana's persistent approaches. . . . Joan talks incessantly, but with a seriousness that is most admirable. Children are more serious about what they do than most adults are about what they do. Play is and should be serious for children. Playing playfully is an acquired adult habit, and I am not certain whether it is not a vicious one. Play is children's work, and, after all, involves less make-believe than most adult work.

To Mrs. Townshend.

21 LINCOLN'S INN.
13 *April*, 1913.

I have been busy with work and other things since I left you. I got a good chunk of the Employment of Children Report written last week. I really have dug up a lot of stuff which will be of permanent use to people who are studying the development of State interference with industry in the nineteenth century, and I have taught myself a good deal about local legislative procedure and other things. How much more solid a grasp one gets of things by having to find them out as one goes along in order to explain phenomena one is investigating—instead of taking them from text-books. I think I am curing myself of the habit of delving

and re-delving in details *ad infinitum*. That also one has to learn from experience. I have finished most of a "Historical Summary of the Development of Child Labour Regulations," which brings together all the multifarious attempts to deal with the thing outside the Factory Acts. It begins with Jonas Hanway and the wretched little boy chimney-sweeps in 1770 and ends with our latest manipulations to circumvent the newspaper proprietors over Employment of Children Bills. I was reminded of the problem in the concrete on Friday night by a wretched van-boy who brought some things to my room from the Stores. I have really been appalled by these boys when they come to my rooms—often at 9 p.m. They all look rotten in health, tired and utterly listless. Of course they are the slum boys as a whole, I suppose—but I think they are worse here than in Leeds. I send you the *New Statesman*, which you probably are not getting through other sources. The absence of *crescendo* cavil and Alleluias pleases me. In fact, I think it is very good. . . .

To Miss C. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN.
April, 1913.

I have just been reading a most remarkable book by Bury on the "History of Freedom of Thought." It is a tough counterblast to James, Bergson, and the crop of anti-rationalist *Schwärmerei* from Theosophy to (without any offence) Syndicalism. It has stirred me up a good deal. I have tacitly come to accept the position since I became an active Socialist that one is entitled to help on social changes, the desirability of which is demonstrable to any one with intelligence and decent feeling, by some sort of myth, vague visions of a Socialist State, etc., which an intelligent man cannot accept literally any more than he can the first chapter of Genesis. For the sake of immediate aims we accept the humbug of royalty, avoid irritating Christians whose beliefs are contemptible intellectually and pernicious ethically, stir up the proletariat with "myths" that we don't believe, and act in matters

of sexual morality with deliberate double-facedness. Now, all this may be necessary, it may even be defensible ethically and in accordance with some tolerable standard of conduct, but I feel I want to think over my whole position. My enthusiasm for social change becomes more deep-rooted the more I get to think (as I do increasingly) in terms of men as they are and of life as it is, in so far as one can form any impression from the facts of daily life as seen from a good many different corners over a few years. . . . But I want to be quite clear that all this lying about religion, morality, and sociology is really necessary before I go on with it. I daresay it is, but unless I am convinced about it, I will not go on. I shall always be deficient in discretion, but I have enough courage to face any moral or practical issue in life that I have ever thought of, so long as I am not hampered by muddle-headedness.

To Mrs. Townshend.

21, Old Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.
Sunday, 25 May, 1913, noon.

I was at Colchester most of yesterday and stopped the night with Mrs. Green. I saw a lot of people. I feel much more in sympathy with the people I knew as a boy there than I have ever done in my life before. The habit of wrangling over formulæ is a miserable divider of mankind. Of course I *do* differ from them in my outlook. But then, they haven't got a definitely formulated outlook at all. They have many vague (and some bad) prejudices—emotions of fear, spite, or jealousy linked on to some religious or political catchword. But how much is all that mental equipment going to be changed by argument and preaching? To some extent it will be and should be. But on the whole changes will be more subtle.

I am sure I can trace a change in the social outlook of the ordinary middle-class business people in the place from ten years ago. It is a little more human and sympathetic. There is less hostility to change as such, and here and there a slight and partial consciousness of the meaning of life on a pound a week.

I had a long intimate talk with Mrs. Green, and also with my former guardian's brother—a curious mystical sort of person. I was inside seven different houses yesterday. It was strange to see my contemporaries all getting married or with young babies. Altogether a vision of life. I think I shall repeat my visits there. It depressed me at times, but on the whole I feel it is all interesting experience, and one has—or at any rate I have—got to get a *modus vivendi* based on life as it is for the world in general. I crave above all things to make myself a part of the " social organism "—or whatever one likes to call it—as it is. I don't want to be an abnormal Bohemian rebel all my life—I have had enough of that. The experience I have had has given me the necessary sense of contrasts which enables me to see the scheme of things as it is. Now I want to use the tools. Forging them is not an end in itself.

Reading Webb on local government fits in with all this philosophic conservatism. What a wonderful nation of conservatives we are!—the Romans of modern times more than any other people, I suppose.

To the Same.

LINCOLN'S INN.
23 *July*, 1913.

ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων! I haven't got rid of that vision of fate and character ever since I saw it at the head of Galsworthy's book. What a grating of jagged masses there is in life! I see no reality in metaphors of harmony. How Shakespeare throws a glare on realities in Angelo in " Measure for Measure," which I read the other day. It is not the moral issue which matters, though I daresay Shakespeare had that consciously in mind when he wrote the play, but the march of a human soul from one driving impulse to another.

. . . . .

The projected visit to America never took place. He went abroad in August for a few weeks to Germany and Italy, and then along the Dalmatian coast. The two next letters and the two articles from the *New Statesman* give some account of his experiences during this trip.—E. T.

To the Same.

August, 1913.

I am leaving in an hour or so for Zara, the first stopping-place on the Dalmatian coast. Had a very pleasant trip from Venice last night, arriving here at 6 a.m. I enjoyed Venice very much for a day ; but I shouldn't care to spend much time there. I never saw a place where life seemed to centre so much round a dead past, and where the essentials of the present were so depressing. There seemed to be more cadging and tip-seeking than in any other town I have ever been to. Every one seemed to be living on odd jobs performed for tourists. It also rather got on my nerves that it was presumed that you wanted to be carried everywhere ; my instinctive distaste to hiring private conveyances would have developed into a mania in connection with gondolas.

A good bust of Daniel Manin and a couple of inscriptions in the Doge's Palace about the '49 siege and the '66 plebiscite cheered me up more than anything else. I sympathize with Morris's feelings about Italy. I detest the Catholic atmosphere more and more, and for a mythology I would rather go to the old Norse stories and the Norse and German atmosphere generally. If I knew the Classics better, I daresay I should be more attracted by Italy. It is mediæval Italy, not pagan Rome, I feel utterly out of sympathy with. (I believe Morris disliked the whole Roman spirit, but I think it was Christianity which really led men astray.) I thought of an amusing idea the other day. Christianity always prides itself on its connection with the emancipation of slaves ; it was a religion of slaves to a large extent. Just as the irruption of slaves into social life was accompanied by one form of nauseous emotionalism, so the feminism of to-day appears along with all the re-emergence of superstition and Orientalism which is going on now. The sight of women in these Catholic churches before hideous images of virgins simply makes me feel sick. To explain the phenomenon is not to excuse it.

I had a splendid bathe on the Lido. I shall get to Zara this evening and should be in Cattaro by Friday. I am

glad to be getting amongst young peoples who have an important history, but not one that absorbs their present. I have read several books on the Balkans in the last few weeks and am very keen to see what a lot of things are like.

To the Same.

CATTARO. 31 *August*, 1913.

I arrived here an hour ago by boat from Ragusa. The place is right at the end of a deep bay surrounded by high mountains, the Montenegrin frontier being only a mile or so away. It is really about the best situated place I have struck. Am probably going on to Cettinje to-morrow and shall spend about a week visiting various parts of Montenegro. I have given up the idea of going to Sarajevo and Bosnia, as it means rather long and expensive railway journeys. I have seen something of Herzegovina at Mostar and the surrounding country, and shall probably just get a glimpse of Albania by going to Scutari via the lake, which is said to be as fine as the best Swiss lakes. I shall come back direct from here to Trieste by boat, as it is by far the most pleasant way of travelling. I shall then probably spend two or three days in some cool place in the Tirol or Bavarian highlands before coming home via Munich.

The heat was bad at Mostar and up in the hills above Spalato, where I did a short walk, but it is not at all bad here.

These Italian-Slav cities along the coast are wonderful places. I am much interested in the Southern Slav question, and continue to devour pamphlets and books about it which I get at the bookshops, and I am trying to learn a little Serbian.

The road from here to Cettinje is one of the finest in Europe; it goes over an enormous mountain. There is an automobile service, but I expect I shall walk the thirty miles. There will be magnificent views of the Bocche di Cattaro, the system of bays and inlets which I have come up.

I don't wonder that the Austrians cling fast to this spot and have surrounded it with forts, though of course it is very bad luck on the Montenegrins that they should be cut off from what is their natural outlet to the sea.

Ragusa was immensely interesting. It was an independent republic till Napoleon took it about 1808 and announced that it had "ceased to exist." It always kept itself free from Venice (unlike all the other cities) by siding with and paying a tribute to the Turks, who were quite satisfied to leave it alone. Its culture was a mixture of Slav and Italian; both languages were and are used and one of the most famous poets wrote in both. The different writers give different accounts as to the predominance of one or the other, according to their bias. For instance, Jackson, the Oxford architect, who is an anti-Slav, says that everything important was Italian, but Arthur Evans gives a much more favourable account of the Slav element. The Slavs are mostly Catholics down to about Ragusa, but the Orthodox Church begins to be more important here.

Mostar is more than half Mohammedan, and the bazaar is as Oriental as anything you could see in Asia. The people are of almost pure Slav blood, but you see an obviously Turkish nose pretty often.

SCUTARI UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION[1]

By F. H. K.

The most prominent feature of Scutari is the grey ruined wall of the citadel on an isolated hill above the quay. From here a view can be obtained across the lake and over the whole plain which surrounds the town.

North-west, beyond the lake, lies the line of Montenegrin mountains. The nearest hill in this direction is Tarabosch, just across the river, the strategical key to Scutari, and the scene of the greatest of the battles between the Montenegrins and Turks. South-west is the course of the wide Boyana, connecting the lake with the sea. It is even now in the dry season navigable for small flat-bottomed steamers. At its mouth a stretch of the sea is visible with the naked eye, some twelve miles away. The

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 27 September, 1913.

international fleet is lying here, and messages are flashed by day and night between the British cruiser *Gloucester* and the detachments of the West Yorkshire Regiment from Malta and of Austrian troops, which share the citadel between them. To the south lies a fertile district, watered by tributaries of the Boyana, and bounded by distant hills. Immediately at the foot of the citadel to the north-east is the bazaar, where a considerable number of burnt houses testify to the recent siege and Montenegrin occupation. A mile of very bad road separates the bazaar from the main portion of the town. Three or four miles beyond this rise the north Albanian mountains.

About a third of the population of Scutari is Catholic. There is a large cathedral, which was very badly damaged by shells during the late siege, and also an Orthodox church. But the whole aspect of the town is Oriental and Mohammedan. The costumes which may be seen in the streets are of many distinct types. The Albanian kilt is not very much in evidence. More common are the close-fitting white trousers streaked with one or two black stripes and reminiscent of the Venetian costumes of the fifteenth century, as represented in Carpaccio's pictures. The chief feature of the festival on the days following the close of the fast of Ramazan was the beautiful costumes of the children. All the cafés in the town, which probably do not exceed a dozen, were filled with crowds of excited boys and girls, clothed in bright, baggy breeches of every hue, who were celebrating the event by being driven up and down the main streets. The scene suggested a sort of Mohammedan Sunday-school treat. The architecture of the town is as Oriental as the costumes. Few of the shops even aim at presenting a European appearance. Jewellers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tailors, bootmakers, bakers, and even a printer, all ply their crafts in workshops wholly open to the street. Taking one craft with another, there must be a not inconsiderable amount of productive as well as of distributive industry in the town.

The authority of the International Commission is indicated by the flags of the five nations (Russia being only indirectly represented by France), which float side by side

over the citadel. The force at the disposal of the Commission now consists mainly of soldiers, who have replaced the naval detachments. England is represented by some four hundred officers and men of the West Yorkshire Regiment, who were sent from Malta. The town is divided into sections, which are assigned to the different nations for patrol work. All the streets have been given Western European names, being in most cases called after the warships of the fleet of the five nations—Rue Gazelle, Rue Antelope, Rue Weymouth, Rue Warrior, Rue Breslau, Rue Dante. The principal sphere of activity of the English soldier is in the streets of the bazaar, which is gradually recovering from the alleged depredations and arson of the Montenegrins. Here the Leeds "Tommy" may be seen mildly ordering small Albanian children to move on, after he has been enduring a game of hide and seek round his legs for some considerable time. But the serious business of the soldier-policeman is more exacting. No one is allowed to carry arms within the town, except by special permit. But Albanians and Montenegrins are in the habit of carrying pistols and rifles everywhere. The disarming of persons entering the town, or illegally keeping pistols, is accordingly the most conspicuous feature of the police work of the force of the Commission. In one case this has led to a raid being made upon a house where it was believed that a number of pistols were kept. The Albanian occupants fired upon the raiders, and two English soldiers replied. Two of the Albanians were wounded, one of whom subsequently died. The others received severe sentences of imprisonment. The rank and file of the English soldiers are inclined to regard it as a considerable grievance that the somewhat tiresome and dangerous police work on which they are engaged is not regarded as active service, and as entitling them to pay at active service rates. Most of them seem to be anxious to be back at Malta, although they do not expect to return for some months.

The authority of the International Commission only extends within a radius of ten kilometres around Scutari. Thus a fugitive from justice has not far to go to escape from the control of the authorities. In the Albanian mountains

government has always been a somewhat shadowy institution, and at the present moment in the north it is certainly altogether non-existent. I have visited a few of the villages east of Scutari. The first feature which forces itself on one's attention is the extraordinary completeness of the devastation wrought by the Montenegrin and Serbian troops. Scarcely a single house in the villages which I saw was undamaged, and in most of them the roofs were completely destroyed. The mosque of the collection of hamlets known as Drišt, some five miles east of Scutari, was in ruins, and on the walls were scrawled a number of words which I took to be the insults of Montenegrin invaders. I confess that I did not stop to endeavour to decipher these with the aid of my scanty knowledge of Serb, because I found the ceaseless fusillade which was taking place from several quarters in the surrounding mountains somewhat nerve-racking. I was assured by an Albanian villager that it was nothing but rifle practice, and no doubt this was the case. But when the sharp whistle of the bullets, as well as the crack of the rifles, became audible, it seemed time for a solitary stranger to retire. One could not help speculating as to the source of supply of ammunition to which the Albanians have access. There is undoubtedly terrible suffering and destitution in the district around Scutari as the result of the war. But the consumption of cartridges which I heard discharged in the course of a single day must have represented the value of not a little bread or seed-corn.

One is glad to see that during the international occupation of Scutari government is not confined to purely police activities, necessary and valuable as these are in the present unsettled condition of affairs. Attention is being paid to public health and sanitary matters. The position of Scutari near the lake is none too healthy, and the siege naturally made matters a good deal worse. A section of the British troops suffered considerably from malaria while it was encamped on the meadows between the town and the lake. The authorities are now providing hospital treatment for natives as well as for their own troops. A new road is being made to replace the existing abominable track which connects the town with the bazaar and harbour.

The daily performances of the military bands are a great source of delight to the inhabitants, and to hear the Italian band is certainly a musical education. The British band is —British. I last heard it strenuously engaged in drowning the beautiful sound of the Muezzin calling to prayer from a neighbouring minaret.

The fact is not lost sight of that the Albanians are supposed to be about to govern themselves in the near future, and therefore require some training in the art of civilized administration. An Albanian gendarmerie has already been formed, and is working in co-operation with the European troops; while an Albanian officer deals with the examination of luggage at the Customs House. How soon an Albanian government will really be in working order it is difficult to guess. Every one seems to expect serious trouble in connection with the delimitation of the Montenegrin frontier, and such has indeed already commenced in the districts to the east of the lake, which the Montenegrins expect to acquire. It should not be forgotten that, some thirty years ago, an "Albanian League" successfully resisted the attempt to transfer the districts of Plava and Gusinje to Montenegro in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin, and the memory of that incident is still fresh. But, even apart from the frontier question, the difficulties of the future government of Albania are great enough. There are not a few Albanians—perhaps more than English observers are willing to admit—who are inclined to lean upon Austria and look to an extension of her influence to help them through their difficulties. It may be that Austria has used questionable means, ecclesiastical and otherwise, to extend her influence. But even Serbian pamphleteers such as the vehement patriot who uses the pseudonym "Balkanicus" recognize that the influence is there. It is certain that both Austrians and Germans have fully made up their minds that the Albanians are to be regarded as a counterpoise against the nine million Southern Slavs, who are regarded as threatening *Deutschtum*, both from within and from without the Austrian Empire. The future of Albania is, indeed, difficult to foresee. I discussed the question with a number of Albanian workmen who were returning to Scutari after a day's work.

Some of them had learnt Italian in the school which the Italians have maintained for some twelve years in Scutari. In reply to the question from which country they would like to have a prince, they said that they did not mind whence the prince came so long as he had *una bella patienza* for Albania. What an exemplary motto for princes in Albania—and elsewhere!

A MONTENEGRIN JOURNEY[1]

There are two ways of embarking from Scutari on the steamer which monopolizes the navigation of the lake. You may hire a flat-bottomed boat and two Albanians to propel it, in order to traverse the two or three miles of shallows which separate the steamer from the quay. But if you are weary of the detestable process of bargaining, and are in a democratic mood, you can be carried free with the common herd in a boat of more than ordinary size and clumsiness. I chose the latter course, though it was a Sunday morning, and the boat was packed as tight as could be with Albanian and Montenegrin peasants and women. The males and bolder females sat balanced on the edge of the boat, while a promiscuous collection of women and luggage covered the bottom. Tobacco was a welcome necessary, as a means of modifying a profound sense of the proximity of one's fellow-men. The heat became more and more intolerable. The aristocrats, with privately hired boats, all passed us before we had gone far, and their boatmen made sarcastic comments on the methods of propulsion—inefficient punting alternating with even less effective paddling—employed by our crew. But at last we reached the steamer. There was just room enough for most of us to lie down on the third-class deck, and I soon fell asleep cheek by jowl with an old Turk, or Albanian maybe. I only awoke when we reached Plavnitza, which is the nearest port to Podgoritza, the commercial capital of Montenegro. They have dredged out a channel here to enable the steamer to reach a quay which is in course of construction. But something seems to have gone wrong

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 6 December, 1913.

with the foundations, since gaping cracks have appeared in the cement, which is held together by a temporary woodwork structure; and the whole quay looks as if it were likely to disappear before it is completed. However, after considerable manœuvring on the part of the steamer, a large crowd of Montenegrins embarked here in order to be taken across the lake to Virpasar.

This is the terminus of the Montenegrin railway system, and most of the rolling stock was waiting to start for Antivari when we arrived. I deposited my belongings in a third-class compartment, but changed my mind when every inch of space became occupied with my fellow-passengers, while numbers of them prepared to sit on the platforms at each end of the wagons. I thereupon moved into the only first-class compartment in Montenegro, which was already occupied by two Austrian officers. No sooner had we settled down than a pompous gentleman in Western European dress entered, and informed us in French that we must leave all the first-class accommodation for the Prince and his entourage. It was intimated, however, that as a special privilege we might travel in the neighbouring third-class compartment if we paid the first-class fare. The peasants were unceremoniously cleared out of this, but I entered into a private conspiracy with an Italian and a Polish commercial traveller that we would not pay first-class fare, even if we had to set the whole Montenegrin Government at defiance. Before long the arrival of the Prince (the King's second son) was heralded by the entry into our compartment of an escort of fifteen typical Montenegrins. They were armed to the teeth with rifles, revolvers, and enough cartridges to fight a battle with, and were clad in striking red uniforms, designed more or less on the lines of the peasant costume. One felt that poverty-stricken Montenegro could ill-afford to turn fifteen honest peasants into swaggering bravoes, dancing attendance on a younger member of the royal house. However, one accepts without demur the equivalent follies in the government of a Great Power. Social waste is always less obvious when it is conducted on a gigantic scale.

The train slowly climbed past a rich valley across the

mountains which separate Lake Scutari from the sea. Near the summit is a long tunnel, which must be without exception the most suffocating in Europe. Even the City and South London Railway in its earliest days could hardly have provided an atmosphere to rival that of the Montenegrin tunnel. The experience of passing through it is trying to the temper, and it was not strange that it precipitated a quarrel between some Montenegrins and Albanians in the last carriage. When the train was taking a rest at the western end of the tunnel, and we had all alighted in order to breathe, the first signs of the trouble appeared in a gesticulating and shouting crowd. However, we started again without much ado, and it was not till the train had rattled some little way down towards the sea that I suddenly heard a shot fired. I looked out just in time to see the smoke of a second shot floating out of a window in the rear of the train. The escort, smelling powder, were like hounds on the leash. The Italian commercial was terrified, until the only woman in the compartment assured him that there was no danger. The Prince called from his window, the train was stopped by the guard, and some of the escort ran to the scene of the disturbance. Two men in succession were unceremoniously hurried up for judgment before His Royal Highness. The first apparently established his innocence. The second seemed to be a little in liquor. He declared that his life was in danger, as he was in a carriage full of Albanians. Since every one carries arms in these parts, no doubt he thought that he could not assert himself sufficiently without letting his revolver off. However, no one was hurt, and the Prince contented himself with confiscating the weapon. Its owner seized the opportunity to rush to the Prince's window and make a speech whenever the train stopped. But the escort dealt with him firmly, and I last saw him ventilating his wrongs to his female relations in Antivari. I hope they comforted him tactfully. Meanwhile the Prince was taking his beer in front of the hotel, while I swam far into the sea, through limpid water reddened with the setting sun. The Italian company which has leased the port are trying hard to make an eyesore of

the southern cliffs of the bay. But they cannot spoil the magnificent line of mountains which rises behind the northern shore. The harbour has not the fiord-like magnificence of the Bocche de Cattaro, on the northern frontier of Montenegro, which Austria holds in so firm a grip. But there is no single bay along the Dalmatian coast more beautiful than that of Antivari. It is at least a single jewel, adorning the narrow stretch of coast where alone the Serbian race has free access to the sea.

To Mrs. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN. *Sunday, 21 September,* 1913.

I had a good time with the children yesterday evening. When I arrived I found R—— in the middle of four little children, two of which belonged over the road. It was really very delightful. It was a great joy to hug Bernard again, and the four children together made a very cheerful noise. R—— really is angelic with them. I cannot imagine any one putting their whole energy and intelligence into motherhood more than she does. I never felt more proud of having her as the mother of my children. She is determined to get the substratum of life right for them, whatever may happen to the superstructure.

. . . . .

You live in your children just as I do in mine, though countless ancestors live in them too. It conjures up a curious sort of vision of human unity. One almost gets a glimpse round the other side of selfhood.

The edges of my personality are not so sharp to-night either. I feel as if I were ceasing to resist the pressure from outside and were throwing out myself too. I generally hold up the walls stiffly. It is a strange sense of relaxation, and a flowing of a wide sheet of water over a boundary.

Good God! how can people live without having children? Still, if you were always cooped up with them in a wretched working-class tenement, it would be impossible to get the best out of them, just as much for mother as for father.

R—— ought to have some more children to look after. I shall never forget her with those four kids in her back room. It was a great sight.

To the Same.

21, Old Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.
13 *March*, 1914.

Thank you very much for your letter, which moved me very much. I never looked scornfully on your general view of life. I only found it hard to see you giving your enthusiasm to the support of a political creed which I feel more and more to be now actually opposed to the forces that make for some measure of improvement in the lot of the twenty or thirty million poor among my fellow-countrymen. I have been compelled again and again to reflect on the fact that I can look forward to taking a part in the causes that I care for just four times as long as I have taken part in them already, and that I can hope to see social changes not immeasurably greater or less than four times those which I have watched already. I have cast the illusion of remote future generations out of my scheme of things. We cannot form ideals even for our own children. Future generation may be as much of a pernicious myth as a theological God.

Well, I am compelled by my nature and by the work I am fitted for to be a political realist. But I really hate myself for quarrelling with you over this. I have valued your love for what it has taught me of life—and I insist on separating the individual from the political life; it is the only livable theory. I am a different being when I am on a committee or pushing a plan of action to what I am in relation to my friends. I find more and more that I don't get real intimacy from the people I work with best. I am inclined to think that this is not altogether an accident. I have observed not a few men who lived almost entirely in their work and seemed really to have lost the faculty of intimacy altogether. It is not of value to man as a political animal.

I have seen you pass through enthusiasms for Women Suffrage, the Labour Party, extreme political Socialism and Syndicalism, while my peculiar compound of Whig Socialism has become more definitely Whiggish (but not in reality less Socialistic), and I have grown more and more

suspicious of any political enthusiasm based on a fixed idea. I have come back to about where I was in 1906—a Liberal-Labour man—after a good many spasms of revolutionary ardour which I now regard as being as far behind me as my religious enthusiasms—in fact, as being the same stuff at the bottom. I want that steam for less exciting and more useful purposes, like any old Whig. When I find the political extremists not merely telling me that what I am trying to help in doing is not good but actively opposing it, I feel it is humbug for me to pretend that I am out for the same thing as they are.

I tell you all this because it is in my mind, or has been, but I really do want to get back to you. I love your sympathy with my work and I don't really care now about its being logically inconsistent; for it seems to me, with extremist politics, life is too short to sort these things out.

Do come and see me next week. I am going to Bradford to-morrow, but shall return, I think, on Sunday night. I am staying with G. and am looking forward to seeing his children.

W. came to see me this morning. We had some interesting talk. We agreed to divide men into the "Chivalrous," "Feminists," and "Genuine Males"—priding ourselves much, of course, on belonging to the last.

To the Same.

IN THE TRAIN TO BRADFORD.
14 *March*, 1914.

Thank you for your letter. I am enjoying my visit to the North tremendously. By God! I do love England. I find myself more and more substituting a definite love of my country for vague Socialist emotion. England is such a glorious place, and the home of such a splendid people. Now I have lived a somewhat detached and artificial life for a year, I find that the impressions gathered in the various places where I lived and mixed closely with people in their everyday life have been transfused into a more or less unified vision—Colchester, Walworth, and Yorkshire. I think of the millions of ordinary English homes in the neighbourhoods that I know and the millions of men,

women, and children as they are, I feel that it is childish to think of them as degraded and mean, only to be redeemed by some thaumaturgic social process. There is no thaumaturgy in social changes, the Lord be praised! It is because of the stuff that is in the people of England that they are worth living with and fighting with. If you can't see and be moved by the stuff that is there, you are bound to be to some extent on the wrong tack about the next move. I belong to England and next to the whole English-speaking world and after that to all the Teutonic races of the North. We are the right arm of the world and Earth's fighting men—the right sort for Augean jobs.

To the Same.

In Train from Colchester.
19 *March*, 1914.

I have just been to Colchester to see Mrs. Green, whose husband has just died, and also to inspect my property and see my tenants. I seem to feel the ghosts of my ancestors and of my old childhood stirring in my bones. There are two kinds of people in the world—the localized and the de-localized. The former are the great majority even in modern England, though intellectuals are apt to forget it. I have been de-localized for ten years, in most respects, though Walworth and Yorkshire got some tentacles round me. But as I gradually cast off the tyranny of youthful abstractions, I, at any rate, leave the ground free for the old influences which found me as a child and as a boy to grow up again. I don't suppose they really will. I have burned too many of the boats, though some leaky old tubs still remain. But I belong *there* in Colchester as much as anywhere—and I am as much at home there as anywhere.

I shall always remember Shaw telling me once how a young man begins by rebelling against his whole environment, and how he goes out and rages and smashes things up, but how at length there comes a time when (without throwing over his acquired convictions and knowledge) he feels he must or at least can go back to his kindred and home—thinking, after all, we are men living life together. It is

very true, of me, anyhow, though I suppose there is the kind which remains rebel and " advanced " all its life.

I had a long friendly talk with Guy the other day, recalling many things and people in childhood and boyhood we had never spoken of to each other before. In a way he is more of a Radical—a rooter up—than I am now, curiously enough.

God ! it is queer in Colchester to talk to simple folk—my small-holder tenant, a railway porter, whom I have known for twenty years. The old things grip.

I tried to get to Mr. Green's funeral—started work at seven o'clock—but I had a tough job getting to the bottom of this coal-mining dispute, which I was determined to make clear in the *Statesman* because no other paper has done so, and worked till two o'clock without lunch.

To the Same.

21, OLD BUILDINGS, LINCOLN'S INN.
2 *May*, 1914.

I think my sort of human animal gets into an unhealthy state of mind if it doesn't work fourteen hours a day and run two miles. At any rate, it is really healthier when it does. So I have done so for three days on end, and feel better. It is a great sensation to feel the stream of British Blue-books flowing through one's brain. I sat down with a great pile to digest for the list, on my right, last night, and in four hours worked through it, heaving each one to the floor on my left with a great crash as I finished it. It would make a good Wagner *motif*. The Local Taxation Report, just out, is a magnificent document, the sort of thing that really makes one's brain work, a first-class piece of British political meditation. I feel as if my soul reached out to the uttermost parts of England through these Blue-books—a truly *lebendiges kleid* for the political soul of the English people. Jack Squire's poem on the Holborn Restaurant is very good. I feel like that when I read Blue-books about millions of people. I stop and think of them all for a moment and see them in streets and factories and workmen's houses and Government offices—all there with their bodies moving for some bloody mysterious reason.

I went to the cinema for half an hour on Sunday night, but the long yarn was about a female detective, and not nearly as good as male criminals and love affairs generally are. The Boat Race was good though.

By the way, Mrs. Bianchi [1] has fallen ill. If she isn't better, I hope to go and see her on Thursday—can't get before. I am rather anxious about the children.

To the Same.

21, Old Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.
3 *June*, 1914.

I really appreciated your letter very much. You know my feeling for you can never die. It is in my bones so to speak—as much of me as anything. But I cannot express the whole of myself at once—and parts of me get submerged at intervals. Some personal ties get practically submerged beyond recovery. But I shall carry my love for you to my grave—I have a sense of fate about it.

I find many things trying now. It is hard to have lost one's faith in Socialism as a sort of religion, and the more ironical in that I believe more and more clearly in it as an actual—as the only conceivable—way of making the basic material organization of life tolerable for the mass of my countrymen—and of Western Europeans. The millions of Hindus and Chinese are beyond my ken. Only what the devil is one to live and work for? I know about how much change I shall see in my lifetime—more or less. I am prepared to do my humble share in that job—but not in a spirit of early-morning enthusiasm, only as a willing, passive vehicle of the will of my country, and an infinitesimally small active participator in the making of that will. I can find plenty of satisfaction in that work. I don't want the hope of place or power to goad me on; but there must be some background to it all. Nothing supernatural or ecclesiastical—I loathe the degradation of the human spirit by priest as much as ever I did. I only want something to take the place of what I had as a youth in my

[1] The mother of a little Italian boy he had made friends with in the street.

dream of a glorious marching Socialist democracy—which is an illusion. I seem to find shimmerings of a substitute in a kind of almost Quaker-like belief in brotherly love apart from any theistic sanction. That must sound queer from me! Yet it is so. I see as clearly as anything that aggressiveness and quarrelsomeness is no earthly good—it has done me no good and it won't do any one else any good. Tolstoy taken literally is absurd. I am a Big Navy man. But the spirit of Tolstoy or Shaw or Voltaire (each at his best) is the only tolerable outlook on life if one sees and feels. And if one were strong enough to live it out in life one could do without supernatural sanctions, and do without pretending to know what one can't know or swaddling oneself in mystical phrases. We have got to make a philosophy out of what we can touch and feel during this twenty-four hours' adventure on the merry-go-round of earth—not out of the guesses of truth as to the beyond, though every man must have his guess or at least his wonder now and again, so long as he doesn't let himself be humbugged about it.

This is my inner self. Alas! I cannot keep this mood. I see and feel clearly about life at this moment. But this afternoon I was another man—or rather animal—and when you came to see me, yet another. Changes of mood are almost as mysterious as life and death itself when you really reflect on them. The life and death of a mood are as strange as the life and death of an individual. At least, it is to me in myself.

That is all now.

To Miss C. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN.
8 *June*, 1914.

I had a very enjoyable day yesterday, inspecting that land and walking round the neighbourhood.[1] I like the corner very much and have written asking the College what

[1] He was thinking of building a cottage for himself at this time, partly with a view to making a home for his old Cambridge "bed-maker," who was to keep house for him there. The site he went to inspect was seven or eight miles from Missenden, on some property belonging to Magdalene College.—E. T.

they would want for an acre. I just didn't think yesterday but gulped in life from the country. I think I must feel the effects of London particularly, or at least more than most people. I really haven't got through much work lately. . . .

The fact is I don't really believe anything nowadays, except that general kindliness would help human life on a bit more and that collectivism is the only common-sense way of running society, if mankind had a bit more intelligence than it in point of fact has.

I met a wonderful old man of eighty-six on Cop Hill and had a long talk with him. He had a blacksmith's shop in Risboro' but is now nearly blind, though he says he often walks ten miles. His mind was as clear as anything. His chief passion was against war, and he talked a lot about the fact that poverty, though it is bad now, is nothing to what it was in the days of his youth. He described once buying a penn'orth of suet for a family who had nothing but a swede to eat. He also approved strongly of Old Age Pensions (I don't know if he had one), and thought we had a very good King, didn't like to hear him spoken ill of, didn't believe in speaking ill of any one. . . .

I have a vague hope that gardening would supply a need in my life. I should like to make a "lot of ten acres" and grow fruit on the slopes of Cop Hill, produce something solid out of the earth instead of endless talk, talk, talk. Man must have either an illusion or a plaything to counteract his intelligence. The day of illusions is gone for me, therefore *il faut cultiver notre jardin.* Candide is extraordinarily true.

When I say I don't believe anything, I do in a way, politically. I honestly believe more and more in the Liberal Party, not for doing anything wonderful, but for helping the country as fast as it will go. I don't think it is my part to play the Socialist game of trying to find as many reasons as possible for differing from the powers that be, when they take a move in the right direction. But it is a belief of intellectual conviction, not of enthusiasm. I feel as if I never should have an enthusiasm again for the rest of my life.

To Mrs. Townshend.

21, Old Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.
14 *June*, 1914.

I had rather a hard week this last week, or I should have replied to your letter before. It moved me very much; you know more about me than any one else ever will and are quite right about my moods.

I have spent to-day with the "Sunday Tramps." Old Haldane, who was one of the original Tramps along with Pollock and Maitland and Leslie Stephen, came out with us. He is a fine old fellow. A constitutional system which brings men like him and Grey and Lloyd George and Simon and Chiozza Money to the front rank of political leadership has got a good deal of life in it yet. You were quite right when you said I ought to mix more with people of various types. I used to get a fair variety in Leeds in one way or another. But, although I learn a lot from M. and N., I get a bit tired of their standpoint, which is pretty well my own, in theory anyhow. Perhaps I get tired of it for that reason. . . .

I am hesitating on the brink of taking part in Liberal politics. I think I shall. I don't see what else I can do usefully in politics. I am decidedly anti-revolutionist, and I don't believe in most of the doctrines which distinguish the I.L.P. from the Liberals—the right to work, extreme anti-militarism, Little Navy and Little Englandism. The Fabian or *Statesman* point of view does not stand for any large movement of or section in English society as it is. It represents very able criticism and a constructive policy which is too logical for English politics. Now, I do care about seeing the concrete circumstances of the life of the English people appreciably ameliorated—as Liberal legislation has in fact appreciably ameliorated them. I have not a very incisive critical mind. It is not my job in life to cut other people's plans up. Therefore why should I stultify myself by cutting myself off from the only line of practical political activity open to me? I am perhaps a keener suffragist than you give me credit for, but I can't

honestly say I think that that is a sufficient reason for keeping out of Liberal politics.

Yet I don't like the Liberal machine—the money, the social snobbery and undemocratic spirit among many of the leading people, and so on. The only thing is, one has to put up with something and simply hope to better it. I don't see that the Labour Caucus is much better than the Liberal—while I simply can't swallow the doctrinaire generalizations of the Socialists. I feel there is in some ways more room for idealism with the Liberals.

S., whom I met to-day, was a Fabian at Oxford and joined the London Fabians and saw a lot of the Webbs. There must be a lot of people who have passed through that phase and left it. It has been a queer phenomenon in English political life. I can't help thinking it would have been better if Webb had taken Potter's seat at Rochdale in the nineties and been a Cabinet Minister in the Liberal Government when it came in in 1906.

I feel I have done things in my life in a different order from the great majority of men. My virtues and vices are, as you pointed out, inverted as compared with those of the common run of humanity, and I suppose it is only natural that the order of events in my life should be too in some ways.

I should like to see you this week if you can come.

To the Same.

KELBERG.[1]
Monday night, 29 *June*, 1914.

Dudley and I started walking yesterday from the Rhine; but we happened to see about the shooting of the Erzherzog at mid-day to-day in the last village reached by the railway up the valley along which we were going. So he has had to hurry back to Cologne and Berlin in order to write up stuff, while I have come on alone.

I am vaguely intending to walk to Treves and possibly just go to Luxemburg. I shall go down the Moselle by boat, I think, on Sunday, and down the Rhine to Cologne on

[1] A village somewhere between the Rhine and Luxemburg.

Monday morning, returning to London on Tuesday morning. This is quite good walking country, and is of course only about sixteen hours away from London. . . .

This evening I was sitting on a grass bank by the roadside watching the sunset. There was one of these Catholic image things just behind me. A peasant woman came across the fields with a dog which ran round me excitedly. She went past me down the road. A quarter of an hour later the dog reappeared, and I heard some one tread on a board which I had noticed in front of the shrine. When I looked round I saw the woman going back across the field; and as I got up to return to the hotel I saw two freshly lit candles in front of the image. Hardened realist as I am, I could not help feeling the beauty of the act. It somehow fitted with the place and time. And yet I wonder if that woman's character is of a piece with the act, as it appeared. My intelligence tells me that as likely as not it was a mean external act of penance. Is it good to have the external beauty and take your chance that it perhaps on the whole means something internal, just because human beings are in the main kindly and decent people? I'm sure I don't know. Anyhow the act was good for me.

To Miss C. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN.
30 *July*, 1914.

. . . How horrible this threatened war is! Where is the sense of the human race? The only thing is, that I don't think it can be argued that capitalism, even the armament firms, are the main force behind it. The big national and racial feelings are there. One may not share them: my renewal of patriotism doesn't really involve any war cult, but one has to recognize them. The Southern Slav movement is the most important of all the national movements in Europe now. I have thought for some time that it would probably prove to be the storm-centre of Europe, but I had no idea anything like this was coming so soon. I can't help thinking we and Germany will settle it somehow. I can't believe in the Russians and French politically or strategically. I am sure the Teuton and Anglo-Saxon are

going to dominate the world politically. Both from a sentimental and from a logical point of view, I detest our position on the Franco-Russian side.

To Mrs. Townshend.

BLACKGANG HOTEL,
CHALE, ISLE OF WIGHT.[1]
Sunday, 2 August, 1914.

I have come down here for a couple of nights to get a little opportunity for peaceful reflections. War news has been trickling through ever since I left London at five o'clock yesterday morning. When I reached Basingstoke they gave notice that Portsmouth harbour was being closed up. I was going by Southampton in order to get the pleasant trip down Southampton Water. To-day I met a postman on special duty taking round mobilization notices to Naval Reservists. This morning I heard that Germany had given twenty-four hours' notice to Russia and France to cease mobilizing, and to-night there is a rumour that she refuses to recognize Belgian neutrality, and has already entered Belgian territory. If so it is all up, I suppose. You know my feelings—my sympathies are all on the other side, except so far as my own country is concerned. I have a sort of secondary patriotism for Germany, and it seems to me madness that we should be fighting on the side of the Russian barbarians and the French, who have caused most of the wars of the last three centuries. The best thing that can happen now is for Germany to be victorious everywhere on land and for us to come out top everywhere on sea. We have ourselves no quarrel with Germany now—every one admits that. And if things were to turn out in that way I think Germany and ourselves would have enough sense to settle the foundations of a lasting peace and keep these quarrelsome, hypersensitive Slavs and Latins in their places.

But the whole thing is too dreadful for words. All that is what I feel as a political animal to be the best practicable thing for the world. As a man, I detest the conception of one national culture regarding itself as essentially

[1] Returning home to-morrow.

the enemy of another. Yet we Anglo-Saxons are the only race who have in any sense really grasped the idea of letting people select whatever culture they like for themselves —and even we have only grasped it pretty imperfectly. But I am no Radical Cobdenite. When I see the sort of people like the visitors at this hotel, I can't help feeling that peace without ideals is worse than war. Have we yet found a substitute for war? The worst of it is these people only get a miserable vicarious emotion out of war. They may have sixpence put on their income tax—but they won't really come essentially nearer realities. Well, the world may learn a big lesson out of this—perhaps it will knock a dose of brotherly love into them which they might not have learned in a century of peace—or ever.

Has ever a nation gone into war more cold-bloodedly and reluctantly than we are going—if to-night's rumour is right? There has been no emotion discernible in London. Every trace of that anti-German feeling which put a few score thousands into Northcliffe's pocket—and thereby served its primary purpose, I suppose—has disappeared completely. Men whom I knew as raving anti-Germans five years ago have now lost every trace of such sentiments, and even the *Times* can't pump much enthusiasm for France. Well, perhaps there will be some mess to be cleared up after it all where I shall be able to help.

Monday morning.

I feel that the main thing about me, what has been the determining factor of my life so far, is an enormous capacity for change and experiment. I can't help feeling that for good and evil I have tested a wider range of experience in the past ten years than the great majority of men. I don't mean to say I have necessarily lived a broader life, but I have experimented in the methods of life a good deal more than most men, and used myself—and other people—as a *corpus vile* almost remorselessly. Well, I can't say I regret it. Character is destiny—and both the folly and the wisdom, both the cowardice and the courage of it seem alike to have flowed from my own character in the main, though external circumstances have determined the

particular deviations of the course. There has been much waste—and there might have been a good deal more. But a man cannot root up the tentacles of his nature as I have done without suffering for it. Had I not some fixed point I don't know what might have happened to me. I am impetuous enough for anything—any madness. And you have been my real rallying-point all these years—the one fixed tie which has kept me in touch with the most human side of life. There is a lot of the brute in me—but the strand of the human that there is, though it runs thin pretty often, is more subtle and sensitive than the thick rope of normal social sentiments which bind most men willy-nilly to their kind and to the traditions of civilization.

. . . . .

I am curiously enough back at where I was ten years ago—with a difference—in this as in other things. I even feel a recrudescence of old ascetic plain-living aspirations. I have no illusions about their value for their own sake, but there is conflict in me between mental and material, between ways of life which I can only regard as better and worse. I feel I should be a better man living life with a minimum of physical pleasure—or not a minimum but rather . . .

NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.
Midnight.

There is no room for one's personal feelings now. I am amazed at the lack of feeling and interest about the war everywhere—even now. I have just passed by a ring of guffawing fools sitting over their whisky in the smoking-room. The holiday people at Cowes and in the train simply didn't seem to grasp the fact that we are on the edge of the greatest abyss in history.

It is too awful for words. I am still hesitating, but I frankly confess my first emotion at the Liberal peace speeches in the Commons is one of disgust at smug insular pietism. One may be a peace man or a war man, but not a peace man on the basis of these old-womanish platitudes. I have long looked forward to a predominantly Teutonic Central European State stretching from Antwerp to Trieste. I

wrote a long letter to the *Nation* on the subject two or three years ago, but I am enough of a Liberal and Constitutionalist to object to the foundations of such a State being laid upon a blood-and-iron policy. It is not good for Europe or for the Germany which I feel to be my own country after England. It means a ring of Alsace-Lorraines all round the heart of the country and probably a war of liberation in the end. I believe firmly that Russia has provoked this war, and that without Russia's intrigues it might never have taken place. Germany naturally determines to strike as hard as she can and as soon as she can—and that involves invading Belgium. But the practical inevitability of this first step, given the Russian aggression, doesn't make it any more acceptable. I can't see now how we can help going in. It may be that if—as may well be—a deadlock occurs, Germany and France and ourselves will all want to stop and Russia alone will try to keep going. That may hurry on by a decade the Western combination against these accursed barbarians, Jew-baiters, and upholders of gross mediæval Christianity. They may stand for culture, but they are the enemies of civilization. Europe outside Germany and England has yet to learn the difference between these terms.

The English Socialist and Labour anti-patriotic Quakerisms are not much good after Hervé's recantation.

I may be excited or conceited or prejudiced, but what I have seen to-day has given me a painful impression of English insularity. I spent a couple of hours in the crowds at Cowes. I had not seen an English Bank Holiday scene for many years and I was glad to be mixed up with it. The patient, courageous, placid stolidity of the crowd was amazing. But the insularity, the inability to get a glimmering of this appalling situation! They had better have been conscripts in some ways than like this. And these smug Liberals—ugh!

I spent most of two days reading a fat book by Holland Rose on the development of the European nations, 1870–1900. It is really very good for refurbishing and expanding one's History.

. . . . . .

Yet though I feel decidedly Nationalist to-night, I can respect the proletariat for refusing to be—these South Wales miners and the engineers who have refused to end the strike unless they get their terms—so long as it is a matter of effective action, not mere smug Pacifism.

I must go to bed. I have work to-morrow.

21, Old Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.
Tuesday.

I kept this back because I don't seem to have said what I mean to say to you. But it is difficult to think and act as one would like at a time like this. Thank Heaven there is no Maficking, except a few crowds, largely composed of boys. What we have got to do in the interest of Europe is to fight Germany without passion, with respect and with all our might, but without bitterness. I believe we may do, in spite of Garvin and Northcliffe. Did you see that horrible *Daily Mail* poster on Monday, "Greedy Germany"? I respect the confidence—magnificent confidence—of Germany daring the whole ring of nations all round her. I feel rather ashamed at not being in a position to be called up. I don't value my life much just now, and I would be game for anything desperate that was of use.

The Pacifists arouse my contempt more than ever. They have made a rotten show.

There may be a chance of some invaluable experiments in dealing with unemployment. Public opinion won't, I think, tolerate the idea of men starving owing to this war. I have just been rung up to join a private committee at Toynbee Hall for suggesting plans to the Government.

I rather think the Labour and Pacifist Radical elements may go down for some years over this business. I wonder if there is hope for a collectivist movement at once national and democratic.

CHAPTER VIII

SOLDIERING IN ENGLAND

AUGUST, 1914, TO APRIL, 1915.

ONCE war was declared, Keeling did not hesitate a moment about joining the Army. He began drilling at once with the Artists' Rifles, but soon decided to enlist in a county regiment. His friend Rupert Brooke and several other University men joined the Artists' with him, but most of them accepted commissions, which were offered, I think, to all of them. Keeling refused, a refusal which he repeated several times later on, and by the end of August had become a private in the 6th Battalion of the Duke of York's Light Infantry.

The zest with which he threw himself into the new life becomes abundantly clear from his letters. As we have seen already, he had been haunted for years by a desire to experience the life of the manual worker and to earn his living for a time by the sweat of his brow. The opportunity arose in a manner totally unforeseen, but none the less welcome. It was a real joy to him to throw in his lot with the rank and file, and a few weeks later to share the camaraderie of the sergeants' mess. He had been talking latterly, sometimes regretfully, sometimes boastfully, of the death of his earlier Socialist enthusiasm, but his eager adoption of the lot of the common soldier, and his unwavering sympathy with his comrades, shows the old fire unquenched.

To Mrs. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN. *7 August*, 1914.

. . . The Belgians are really magnificent. I can't help wishing we had got a few tens of thousands of troops over there already; but no doubt the Government has got its plans well laid. There seems no doubt that the Chauvinists really got the bit between their teeth in Germany, though I sympathize with the whole of Germany over the Russian danger enormously. . . .

I think the conduct of the British nation is really fine.

Only the Northcliffe Press shows a degraded Jingo spirit, and, at any rate up to two days ago, the Maficking crowds were nearly all boys. I heard a story yesterday that the Government heard half an hour after the German refusal to agree to mediation over Serbia that Austria had agreed.

It seems pretty clear that the Germans have no friends anywhere in the world, except perhaps in Turkey, and possibly Bulgaria. Of course, one will wait to learn the German version of the whole story after the war, before finally accepting the British version. I still suspect that Russia really is to blame more than any one, though one can't prove it on the evidence now available.

I still hope that the moral results of this war may outweigh much of the material loss. It looks as if, for instance, it would settle the Irish question. I only hope that there won't be a repetition of the *post*-1870 spirit. The aim of every one who is a good European as well as a patriot is to look forward to a settlement which will avoid that. How will Germany come out of it as a nation? That is the overwhelmingly interesting thing. I hope we shall give Germany back every scrap of her colonial possessions, and even a bit more if we can. But, of course, all that assumes a complete British victory by sea, and one must not be over-confident about that. I had a card from Korsch which reached me just after the outbreak of war. They refused to give him a commission because he is suspected of Social Democrat leanings, so he is going in as a non-commissioned officer.

I happened to have five pounds in cash when the scare began, and can send you a pound if by any chance you are in difficulties for money. I hope to be able to draw no cheques for some days.

It will be extraordinarily interesting if the credit system shows itself capable of standing a strain like this without really in any way collapsing, but there is bound to be frightful unemployment afterwards, if the Government does not take really big steps.

I only wish things were brought home to the comfortable classes more here, as they are abroad. We all get

our meals and comfortable beds just the same, and it seems rather disgraceful.

The Edmonton Co-op. has just opened a branch near here, and I have joined. I am rather glad to be a co-operator again. It was one of my earliest enthusiasms; I made my mother buy everything from the local Co-op. when I was fifteen, and in some ways it is the finest of the British working-class achievements. The Co-ops. are, of course, of enormous value now in keeping down prices. Bread was still at the normal price at my Co-op. on Wednesday, whereas it had gone up a penny everywhere else.

To the Same.

LINCOLN'S INN. 24 *August*, 1914.

Thank you very much for your letter. Most people are cursing me for enlisting, but I think the argument about being wanted at home can be pushed too far. . . . They say I am doing the easy thing, shall have a good time, and so forth. As far as I can see, I shall like it more than I thought I should, and I feel I shall be a better man for being a really hard-trained soldier, as I hope to be at the end of six months. Am I not justified in doing a thing which is at any rate not dishonourable in itself, and gives one direct experience of another side of life and another way of living altogether, at a time when one is not really wanted as much as ordinarily? The argument that I shall be of no more value than a bus conductor in the ranks doesn't move me at all. I feel that there is some value in standing level with the bus conductor at a time like the present.

Rupert Brooke has dropped out. He wants a commission after all, and thinks he can get one through pushing in various quarters. There is a young Cambridge fellow who came in with us who is stopping with me, but we shall probably get separated, as his parents object to his volunteering for foreign service, and he is not sure if he is strong enough. . . . God! it is good to feel one's muscles stiff after four hours' drilling. I don't think I shall ever stoop again. I have thought of going in the Kitchener Army. But our battalion really is a very

fine corps, one of the crack Territorial Corps; and although there are stories that Kitchener is down on the Territorials, and won't use them for foreign service, it seems impossible that he won't take advantage of the fifteen thousand or so who have volunteered for foreign service and turn them into a special corps, or convert them into regulars if he likes *pro tem.* I wish they had made Haldane and not Kitchener Secretary for War. Let K. be Commander-in-Chief, but, damn it all, we are fighting European militarism if we are fighting anything, and we ought to uphold our own constitutional principles. I don't see what we should lose in efficiency by so doing in this instance. Also the filthy Northcliffe Press attack on Haldane was damnable.

I get more and more furious at these attacks on Germans here. It is so damnably mean dismissing wretched governesses and servants and so on. Even this "smash German trade" movement has a touch of the mean about it, but I suppose that is inevitable. It looks as if this might be a particularly brutal war.

I do hope the Allies are holding the Lille–Namur line, and may be able to break the German communications by an attack from Namur and Antwerp. But the Germans must have foreseen the risk of that. By the way, Belloc's two articles (one unsigned) in *Land and Water* are an admirably lucid elementary exposition of the art of modern war and of this campaign in the West.

The Dalmatian and Adriatic fighting is more vivid to me than any other after seeing all these places. I hope the Montenegrins will be too busy to attack Scutari. I see that the French contingent went up from Scutari to join the Montenegrin Army. That international rescuing of Scutari from the Montenegrins was a single fine European achievement in the middle of all the diplomatic rivalries, and it is sad to think of it going under.

To the Same.

LINCOLN'S INN. *August*, 1914.

. . . God! one wonders how one would stand up to some of the things one reads of, but I suppose one might.

Anyhow, it is not that, but slamming hard discipline one has to face in the next few months. The Germans must have lost enormously. Even they can't stand that for ever. They seem to have sacrificed themselves just like the Japanese in the Russian War. It is magnificent. I can't work up any feeling against them, in spite of the atrocity stories. We're all capable of pretty bad things given the least encouragement to barbarities; it is absurd to blame the men. The Germans really do seem to have less power of appreciating other people's point of view than most races. Louvain is a blunder. I am not enough of a scholar or artist to feel directly and deeply about the destruction of the beauties of the place. It does move me, of course, but not as much as lots of other things. The everyday life of the present is my main interest, and I am not sure how much the culture of Louvain really means to that. Of course, it would horrify me a bit if I were ordered on a sudden to help destroy a beautiful town; perhaps it wouldn't if one had been engaged in fighting for a week on end, but I can't help feeling that a lot of people who execrate the conduct of the Germans about Louvain wouldn't really feel much of the beauty of the place in their own lives, and if so, the execration partakes of cant.

I am not going into this job in a simple swelling mood of patriotism. That is there, but there are a lot of other things, personal and impersonal, which complicate it. But no doubt the sergeant will smooth all those creases out.

Is the world going to come out of this business saner? I am rather depressed about that idea now. It seems that we are perhaps simply going to learn to hate the Germans. I expect I shall be a stronger Pacifist after the war than any of the people who are Pacifists now. But I don't feel one will have earned the right to be one unless one has gone in with the rest.

To the Same.

LINCOLN'S INN. 26 *August*, 1914.

. . . Most of the men (sixty or seventy) in the squadron in which I am drilling are getting very sick at the delay

in swearing us in, and the slackness in getting through the work. The Colonel addressed us to-day, and said we were very fine fellows, etc., but could promise no definite date. I have therefore practically decided to go in the Kitchener Army. Luckily enough, I was rung up to-day by an Oxford man in the Board of Trade, who heard I was thinking of going in the ranks in the Kitchener Army, and wants to come with me if he can get permission. He is a very good fellow and would make a good comrade-in-arms. We both had the idea of going and enlisting in a country district—West of England, Sussex, or Westmoreland. The men who are being enlisted in London are in many cases rather awful types, much farther off the decent workman than we are from the latter. I saw a good deal of the type at the starting of the Exchange in Leeds. Countrymen or miners or any set of men from a district with something of a traditional standard of comfort would make much better fellow-soldiers, and I don't see the point of running up against the worst types of proletarians.

I suppose it is no good expecting to be back before twelve months. It means a big break in one's life, and I find it rather a business settling up my affairs.

I should be happier with a decent sort of workmen than with the middle-class young men in the Artists. And I think the Kitchener Army will get tougher work and training; we shall be the professionals.

If the war does go on for a long time it will be queer to turn into a regular professional soldier scouring Europe. But I hope to God Europe will come to its senses, or at any rate that Western Europe will eventually unite against Russia if things drag on indefinitely.

I shall not be surprised if the Germans are in front of Paris in a month. Our fellows seem to have fought well.

To Miss C. Townshend.

LINCOLN'S INN. 1 *September*, 1914.

Thank you very much for your letter and the ripping photographs of the children. I should like to have shown them myself as a Tommy.

I shall be glad to be off in a way. An awful rush of things to-day. Two or three people are coming up especially from the provinces to see me this evening, so I am having a sort of beef-and-beer feed for them and others, and I'm afraid I can't get away.

I hear Territorials are already going to such places as Malta, so I expect the New Army ought to get the tough fighting as soon as we are trained.

Philip Reid, who fought through the South African War, is trying to get into a Hussar regiment as a trooper. I do hope every one who can enlist will do so, because it would be such a fine thing to beat the Germans with *Freiwillige*, and it seems that we and the Russians will have to do the beating; the French, as I always thought, are not nearly as tough stuff.[1] I should myself like to see as large a share as possible of the victories fall to us, and after us the Russians. I have no wish to aggrandize the French. The Germans would have been in Paris now if it hadn't been for our fellows. I begin to feel more friendly towards the Russians—it is all absolutely irrational—but I feel the French have let us down, and I don't see what title a country which can't defend its own frontiers has to be a first-class Power.

I can't feel any hatred against the Germans. Germany will remain my second mother-country always—unless she wins.

To Mrs. Townshend.

WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
9 *September*, 1914.

It has really been nothing but beer and skittles so far; even the dullest operations have been tinged with novelty. We are now gradually getting into the regular Kitchener routine. This evening it has been raining, and one has thereby got a slight foretaste of realities. Crouching in

[1] His estimate of the French altered very considerably when he got to know more about them, but he never lost his feeling of kinship and affection for the Germans.

a tent in the rain with the alternatives of a crowded canteen or pub. is not a cheerful job.

One feels one could value real intimacy in such circumstances. Under this glorious sky and in this scenery, and with all the varied interests of the new life, I thought I should never want it. I am not really any more intimate with any of the seven Oxford men than with the many friends I have made among non-coms., old soldiers, navvies, painters, shop assistants, and all sorts of fellows here. My opinion of the human race, or at any rate of the common Englishman, goes steadily up from being herded with him. But of course it will be best to wait till one has had many rainy days before forming a final opinion ; it has been nothing but a picnic so far.

We are now finally settled in our battalions, companies, and sections. We are the 6th Battalion. Our orders are to be ready to go abroad by Christmas. I think we shall make a tough battalion. The average calibre of the fresh recruits is good, and I feel confident when I look along my platoon.

I spent most of Sunday helping the overworked cooks by cleaning tins and chopping wood, and it has put me on better terms with the old hands than anything else would have done.

Kitchener has just sent word that all extended order drill is to be done at five paces' extension, as he attributes the heavy casualties in France partly to the fact that we have been working only on three paces' extension. The training seems to me as practical and to the point as it could be. . . .

One might be tolerably happy at this game all one's life, but one can't cast out the personal and complicated from one's life altogether. The view over Laffan's Plain, on which we drill, and the sunset and delightful early misty mornings bring one back to the old grubbing in one's own wretched soul. However, it's a long, long way to Tipperary, and one's soul belongs to the Army as well as one's body *pro tem.*

To Miss C. Townshend.

WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
20 *September*, 1914.

I have had some ups and downs lately. Was laid up on Saturday, feeling pretty bad as a result of inoculation. It was hours before I could see a doctor, and as a tent-inspection was on, I had to lie in the open in a cold wind most of the morning. However, I was quite all right by Monday. Have been busy since then trying to get an article written, but it is almost impossible to write. I got something done, but I don't think it is worth publishing.

Have been made a full corporal to-day. I am not over elated, as I don't feel I know enough, and also feel that a lot of the other lance-corporals are as good as me or better.

I have got quite attached to the Major in our Company and the Subaltern in our platoon, have got to know them well, as a private or non-com. knows an officer, and I would do anything for them. Our platoon sergeant is a splendid fellow and it will be damnable if he goes.

It is curious how easily one can throw oneself into the life of the common soldier, not be moved by the delightful scenery one passes on route marches or the splendid sunsets across the plain or the wonderful early morning mists, and sink either depression or exaltation in a sixpenny blow-out in a Soldiers' Home (magnificent places, one couldn't do without them). I have practically given up both smoking and drinking alcohol without thinking about it. But I have been feeling the last few days that one must keep an inner life going. It will be easier as we do more route-marching. I am so accustomed to walking that I can think then more peacefully than anywhere else in the crowded life of camp.

I am strangely isolated without feeling at all lonely, and find myself more and more retiring to live my most real life with my own thoughts. I have knocked about in so many different atmospheres in the short space of my life, that I don't find that the mere fact that people

are educated makes them any better companions for me than the rough-and-ready sort of workman, unless they are educated in some measure within the circles of experience and thought which I appreciate myself.

To Mrs. Townshend.

WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
27 September, 1914.

Thank you very much for sending the "housewife." It has been invaluable to me to-day. I got my uniform this morning—at least, coat and trousers; caps are still unattainable. The trousers are new, but the coat has had a good deal of wear and all the buttons needed sewing on, in addition to which I had the pleasurable task of sewing on my stripes.

Yesterday we were inspected by the King in the morning, in the afternoon I began to learn semaphore with the regimental sergeant-major, and in the evening bayonet fighting. It is extraordinary what a lot there is to learn about pigsticking one's fellow-men. I am bad at it. I was canteen corporal yesterday, which means a sort of official pub chucker-out. I think I am less qualified for making a pub chucker-out than for any other job on God's earth, and I was rather fearful, as I had never been in the wet canteen here, as I heard the beer was bad, and also haven't wanted any, and the crowd in the place looked unattractive. I had to open and close the canteen at the right hours and make fellows line up for drinks instead of fighting for them, and turn out fellows with bayonets. I stood at the bar, and half of the people who got drinks offered me a swipe out of their mugs or tins. At first it seemed like corruption, but I found it easier to get fellows to do things by drinking with them first, and the sergeant over me seemed to take it as a matter of course, so I must have drunk a good deal during the time I was on duty. However, I am so fit now that I think I could swallow several quarts of canteen beer without turning a hair. That job brought me up against a rougher type of man in the battalion than I had got to know before. They're all right if you remember they are just overgrown children;

but so are we all really. Once I saw there was not likely to be any occasion to use my fists I was quite at ease. I don't mind trying to fight any one if I have to, but I frankly don't want to, and I found that my official insignia (a belt and bayonet, which only the man on canteen duty may wear in the wet canteen) and good-humour were enough to carry me through.

I gathered that these chaps all knew me as "Uncle Sam," presumably because of the beard. This afternoon I found time for a leisurely cold bath in a wash-hut in the sun. I have never enjoyed a bath so much in my life.

Take it all in all, this is a fine life. I feel more and more that all these young fellows will be far finer chaps for the experience, whether we get fighting or not. The worst of it is, I don't see how any system of collective life and discipline could really equal that of a soldier in war-time. The only chance lies in James's idea of industrial conscription, especially applied to the dangerous trades.

The camp was a fine sight this afternoon, a series of football matches between the companies, impromptu miniature range firing, bayonet fighting, and tent-pitching and rapid-firing competitions and a few of us having cold baths in the sun. It's worth a good deal of public money to give us all that.

To the Same.

WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
1 *October*, 1914.

We had a route march this afternoon and practised outposts this morning. I am pretty tired. I sacrificed my chance of tea when we came in just before dark for the sake of getting a cold bath, and have just eaten three-penn'orth of rice and two cups of cocoa in a Soldiers' Home and I feel very bloated. I have heard that I am to be made a sergeant in a day or two. It's a bit previous, and I would really rather go on as I am for a bit. I am none too good at drill. Also I don't know how I shall really like the sergeants' mess. It means an end to the old meals on the grass outside a tent, or inside in bad weather, and a sit-down dinner. The sergeants look after

themselves very well. Their beer is better than in the ordinary wet canteen, and they say that they get better cooking very often than the officers. I object strongly to the principle of different ranks having different physical conditions, though I think there might well be a bit more Prussianism in the discipline of the Kitchener Army as it is at present. You still see fellows slouch up to officers to answer questions or argue with superior sergeants.

I like this country immensely. There's nothing to beat the sombre foreground of a wood of Scotch firs against the sky. I like them especially in our early morning marches, when the sun shines through the mists against the trunks.

I was orderly corporal this morning, which means serving out the dinner. It makes me sick to see the way in which *l'homme moyen sensuel* will fight for food when there is really plenty to give every one a good meal. Frankly, such general love as I have for my fellow-man oozes away when I see him behaving as a "struggle-for-lifer," as we call the worst class of grabbers.

To the Same.

WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
9 *October*, 1914.

I am infernally tired to-night. We had extra stiff gymnastics and drilling to-day, and I stood for one and a half hours as witness at the pay-table while three platoons were paid, which tired me more than anything else. I drew nineteen shillings myself this week, and feel very rich. I have got a cap now. I got it by buying a civilian cap for a man who will be discharged shortly, and I hope to get putties to-morrow. It is rotten not being dressed properly when you are a sergeant.

There was a good leading article by Ensor in the *Chronicle* on "The Education of Recruits." The difficulty is that the N.C.O.'s are of course nearly all Regular Army men, very fine, but not with much idea of teaching through the mind. I don't think most of them would appreciate the preliminary talks on the theory of drill which I give

to my squad when I am trying to get them perfect in a movement.

I am thinking of offering to take a class in German in the evenings.

The sergeants' mess is the finest example of a decent collectivist spirit in a body of men living in common I have ever found. There is no cliquiness, no backbiting or discussing other sergeants in the mess behind their backs. How many College common-rooms could you say that of? After all, fellowship is life, more than anything else anyhow, and if a body of men achieve that, much can be forgiven.

It is a tradition throughout sergeants' messes in the Army, they tell me. It really is a genuine freemasonry—much more than among commissioned officers, I should say. . . .

I was in charge of the whole wet canteen a few days ago without any corporal to help. It really is the rottenest job of all. A lot of policemen and cooks tried to make a bit of trouble when I insisted on turning out a man of another regiment and in closing to time; but I came through all right both times.

To the Same.

ALDERSHOT. 15 *October*, 1914.

. . . The rain is all right now there are only six other men in my tent, and all of those sergeants, and also in view of the fact that there is the sergeants' mess to sit in. In fact, I was not sorry to have a sleep yesterday afternoon. We had a brigade route march for the first time yesterday morning. One battalion each of the Somersets, Yorks, and Durhams make up a brigade with us. We are now beginning musketry and trench-digging. I have a lot of bets on in the sergeants' mess that I can do the 5 × 3 × 2 trench single-handed in the regulation hour. They all swear it can't be done, but I fancy myself with a pick and shovel, and I'm damned if I will be beaten by the Welsh miner we have got in "C" Company.

In view of the bad news, they are talking of sending us

to France as soon as we have done musketry. The thing I like least about the war are these tales of the Russians being blown up by the thousand outside Przemysl, or whatever they call that Galician fortress. I expect the Germans have got that ready for us on the Rhine. However, it would be all over before even our new company officer could expect us to do "eyelashes right chick" as we call it. And it's a long way to the Rhine, as things are now.

I am not having a particularly easy time just now in our platoon; in fact, all the junior non-commissioned officers are finding the position of responsibility without proper authority rather trying.

I got a fellow fined three days' pay to-day and thoroughly well cursed by the C.O. for insolence. The swine then went sick before afternoon parade without reporting, so he has been nabbed again; I am not going to bring any more of the troublesome fellows up, but just give them squad drill until they are ready to drop without saying a word. It is much simpler than bothering about a trial. They are mostly clerks, who can make quite good soldiers if they like, but can't drop into this life as easily as either a gentleman or a rougher sort of chap, and don't like being ordered about by sergeants who are of a rougher type than themselves. They are as bad to the old hands as they are to me.

Friday night.

Been trench-digging this afternoon—a great game! I shifted more dirt in the time than any one else in my platoon. It being pay-day, there is a lot of drunkenness. I must say I am absolutely sick of that side of soldiering. It isn't as if the fellows got drunk once in a way. They drink too much all the time and a great deal too much once a week, and then grumble at not being able to keep up at the marching. Of course they are not all like that. It is the men over thirty-five who are the worst. . . .

I wish you would send me a couple of volumes of Dickens—I have tramped all over Aldershot and Farnborough and can't find a bookshop—and a couple of French novels too.

I have found a few chaps who want to learn German, but I think I shall start entirely without books in an informal way. I think that will suit them and this atmosphere best.

To Miss C. Townshend.

COLCHESTER. 25 *October*, 1914.

I have been having the time of my life here among old friends. There is no idea in a normal provincial town that soldiering is a whimsical or abnormal thing to go in for, and the way in which the town has pulled together and is working for the men here is splendid. I think we do deserve to be encouraged; it's all very well for a natural ruffian like me, but a lot of these young chaps are not very happy, and only a small number get the fun of obtaining stripes. I saw a girl in Aldershot selling stamps to the men lined up trying to get into the post-office. I was so much moved that I felt a lump in my throat and went up and down two or three times wanting to go and thank her, but I didn't like to. It is fine to see the large number of institutes and social rooms they have set up here and the number of women working in them. In Aldershot one never speaks to a woman.

I am very glad I am not wholly a damned de-localized intellectual. I feel I belong here to Colchester more than anywhere. This is the England I am going to fight for, anyway. At least, it is more of a microcosm of the real England than any other place I know intimately.

I sat talking to Mrs. Green this afternoon, and in my own mind passed over all the towns where I know people doing things and factories and places. I know none of them as well as Colchester, though some of them I know a good deal about. It was satisfactory to feel so many links to one's country, a kind of ferocious love of it; though I can't get up any animosity against Germans and have been sticking up for them against people here, except as regards their incapacity to get the idea of letting other people have their own soul, and their rotten "Kultur" talk, which is like Oxford intensified ten times over.

Well, I must write another letter. Have been picking the best walnuts in the world from a fine old tree in my garden here. I have got a plan for making an avenue of walnut-trees along a private road across our estate. To plant walnut-trees is to confer a substantial benefit on humanity, and it's a good way to lay out a few pounds. They won't grow up for thirty years, but they will be a sort of memorial of the Great War to a few people, and I daresay there will be a lot of kids in a hundred years' time who will enjoy climbing about them as I enjoyed climbing about the old tree at the bottom of our garden. So you see I am a whole-hearted sentimentalist now, a real sentimental soldier, and I shan't be jogged out of it by any bloody enlightenment.

Joan was not the least impressed by my uniform. She didn't seem to know what a soldier meant, but of course that is not taught in an enlightened household. I don't mean to be nasty, only I feel the contrast with my own childhood. I daresay the new ideas are right; perhaps if all kids were brought up not to play at soldiers like good little Fabians, they wouldn't want to play at the same game when they grew up. But then they will never get the particular bite on the apple of life which I have had the last two months, and, by Christ! I wouldn't change places with them even if I am going to be popped to glory in six months.

To Mrs. Townshend.

SERGEANTS' MESS,
WATTS COMMON, ALDERSHOT.
15 *November*, 1914.

I have had the devil of a week of it as company orderly sergeant. Up any time after 5 a.m., and tearing about the camp in rain and swamps of mud, warning fatigues and musketry parties, compiling endless rolls and absentee reports, calling rolls, acting as a sort of magistrate's clerk, jailer, and usher rolled into one when men come up for trial at orderly room, etc., in addition to attending orderly parades and being in charge of half a platoon for musketry. You can imagine that I have enjoyed myself. On Friday

night we suddenly had field firing put on our company at twelve hours' notice, so I had to rout all our lines out of bed at five o'clock. As a lot of them had been frozen to death pretty well on a motor-lorry when on fatigue at Witley, and had missed most of their grub, they were inclined to grumble, but I am learning how to mix discipline and persuasion and flatter myself that I got them on parade smarter than the company sergeant-major would have done.

I have got to know the roughs in our platoon pretty well —fellows who are in and out of clink regularly for drunkenness and answering back to N.C.O.'s, and am rather proud of the fact that I have managed to get on good terms with them and at the same time got some control over them. It's easy enough to deal with the cheekiness of young clerks and mechanics, or relatively easy, but these fellows lie and thieve and fight as part of their everyday life, and are as slim as Old Nick. You never get to the stage of really trusting them, but you can establish working relations with them by expedients which seem almost childish, silly jokes and a kind of assumed (for me) music-hall, pub-loafing heartiness. It's acting, of course, but I come to feel more and more that all leadership is in a way acting, conscious or unconscious. Only, like Beerbohm's "Happy Hypocrite," after a time you become the character you act, whether it is a sergeant in the D.C.L.I., or a popular politician, or a music-hall character, or a barrister. There is very little difference in the quality of any of the parts.

I am as happy as ever at this job. I have read Shaw's *Statesman* supplement with enormous joy. It renews his old spell over me completely. It is so magnificently sane. Of course, I disagree at some points—for instance, his Fabian contempt for the Army. All civilians assume soldiers are fools until they have been soldiers themselves. I did the same, but the idea makes me savage now. Also, whatever may be the moral or immoral results of war itself on actual belligerents, training for war in time of war is the greatest game and the finest school for men in the world.

Like most of the sergeants who talk about the thing at all, I honestly expect to be plugged out when we get over the water, and in the occasional moments when one thinks of things in general at all it puts them in their right proportion. The one thing that is clear is that it is no good fussing too much about life. One ought to regard the whole world just as one regards our camp—a collective adventure in which you have just got to help each other out as best you can. There's nothing else about it. The question whether there is anything beyond this life or not really makes very little difference to the only possible reasonable and decent philosophy of conduct which a man can have. Above all, it is no use being too solemn, even if you are a bit solemn by nature, as I am. I make no secret of my religious opinions here. We had a fire-worshipper (Parsee) among our recruits, subsequently discharged for ill-health. He used to take a mat and pray at the canal side at sunrise. They were talking about him in the sergeants' mess. I said that the sun was as good a god to worship as any other. The simple Homeric old regimental sergeant-major, who organizes a Church Parade to absolute perfection in the last detail, said, " Yes, I expect you'll get as much answer to your prayer there as in any other quarter." I can't get over the irony of that Church Parade. Why can't men stand up collectively to the facts of life? We don't know about the beyond; all we know is that there is honour and dishonour here and now, even if the shrapnel is the end of everything for me and the cooling of the earth the end of all things for the particular ants who call themselves men.

To Miss C. Townshend.

WITLEY CAMP. *27 November*, 1914.

Am enjoying firing my course of musketry huge.y. Succeeded in getting seven bulls in succession to-day amidst roars of applause from my platoon in the rear, and have done better than several of the other sergeants the last two days, though I made a bad start.

We were firing at 300 yards to-day. If it had been Germans instead of targets a good many of my shots would have laid a man low. Old Philip Reid came down to see me to-day. He is on leave.

It is very fine of a man of his age (forty-five) to go as a trooper. He is enjoying it hugely. We agree very much about our view of Army life. Neither of us has any desire for a commission. If ever I do take one it will be from a sense of duty. The sergeants' mess is really the most congenial atmosphere I have ever lived in. I like it more and more. I am absolutely at ease here and begin automatically to say "was" for "were" and drop my *h*'s. Why should I go and bother about being a gentleman? It's a strain to me in a different way from what it would be to an ordinary sergeant, but still a strain. I am, as a matter of fact, on fairly intimate terms with all the officers in my company and with some others. For everyday companionship I honestly prefer the sergeants. They really are nearer me than the officers, though I respect and like practically all of those whom I know. I feel myself getting more and more of a personal influence over my platoon. Why should I throw all that away? I know that even now they would follow me anywhere under fire. It is a big thing to feel that, and I feel more and more attached to them individually; they get to know my ways. I expect more than most sergeants here on parade, and in return there is nothing I won't do for them off parade.

But I must be off to bed—breakfast 6.30 a.m.

My platoon is firing better than any other. These clerks and young mechanics and shop assistants will beat the slum roughs at most things; mine is by far the most civilized platoon in the company.

To Mrs. Townshend.

WITLEY CAMP. 19 *December*, 1914.

Just got the Regimental Magazine off my hands. It is to appear on Monday. I am on canteen duty to-morrow, but I think I can be out of camp from 2 to 7.30, which

will give me time to walk over to see you. I am rather keen to make something of the Magazine. Of course, a lot of it has to be stuff that doesn't appeal to me much; still, one can make it as good as possible of its kind.

Just been having rather an interesting talk in the mess with several old sergeants. I like the life in the huts enormously. It is queer how one gets more and more attached to the regiment. It is a real home to me. If it weren't for drink, I think it would be as fine a way of organizing the ways of life for men as could be found. I am rather looking forward to Christmas here. It will be rather fun in the mess. We have just got a draft of recruits, the first we have had. The half-dozen allotted to my platoon are very nice fellows, including a little Welsh pit-boy who is an amusing little lad.

I rather expect we shall go as a whole Division to help in a big move in the spring. I liked the R.A.M.C. man's letter in the *Times* to-day. I believe the loathsome, vitriolic hatred of the Germans is confined to journalists and civilian intellectuals. I doubt if it exists among the men who have got to face the bullets.

To the Same.

April, 1915.

I grow more and more convinced of the rightness of our side in this war—not, I think, merely because I have become so definitely and closely associated with the fighters, but by honest conviction and without any hatred of Germans as such. I don't think an average man can be sure of being sane about this business unless he knows he is going to face death like the rest; this may seem prejudiced, but I think there is something in it. As the days draw nearer and nearer for going, one gets a more and more realistic sense of values in life, and on the political as opposed to the individual side English liberty is certainly one of them. I can't help thinking more than most men about the first near screech of the shells while one is lying in the bloody mud, or the first near glimpse of a German uniform—perhaps through the trees when one is scouting, and it's all a matter of touch and go whether you or he

shoot first, or (remembering the textbook maxims) try to hide so as not reveal yourself—your heart beating like a bloody engine all the time (it does even when one is on manœuvres). I think I have more than the average amount of cowardice in me. But, by God, what a thing to have lived through, if one does live through it!

What a brotherhood there will be between all those who shared the experience! I shan't be much of a political or Labour Socialist after this war—am not much of one now—but I am more and more keen on the practical Socialism of a living and continuous wage, and I think these pensions and separation allowances will do probably more than anything to raise the nation's conception of the standard of life of the workers.

Must stop now to rush off—up at 5 a.m. to-morrow.

EARLY DAYS[1]

By a Recruit (F. H. K.)

There is no surer method of escape from excitement over the war than enlistment in Kitchener's Army. Ever since the moment three weeks ago when I swore to defend His Majesty George V and his successors from all their enemies, the direct impressions of life as a recruit have almost completely effaced all feverish interest in the actual progress of the war. The campaign is scarcely ever discussed in our camp; we are certainly less well-informed about it than any average aggregation of two thousand civilians. News of the casualties amongst the battalion of our own regiment at the front creates as much interest as any large movement of the Allied Armies. It is more related to our daily life, both because the regiment is a very present reality in the consciousness of the slackest of us and also because it may affect our chance of going abroad to fill up gaps in the ranks.

As one of a party originally numbering three, I made a preliminary visit to the Scotland Yard Recruiting Station

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 26 September, 1914.

before actually being sworn in. Each of us was about six feet high, and we were at first pressed by the recruiting officer to enlist in the Guards. "That's the place for fine young fellows like you," he said. We were flattered, but deterred by imaginary visions of pipeclay and ceremonial drill. As we were all moved by a terror of horses, the cavalry was out of the question. I had a weakness for artillery, but a musician in the party objected to being deafened. We therefore decided by a method of exclusion on the infantry. "Well, then," said the recruiting officer, "why not try a county light infantry regiment? You'll like it better than a regiment recruited from London or a big town." (*Light* infantry, I may remark, march at 140 to the minute, instead of the 120 of an ordinary line regiment.) We hit more or less by accident on the ——shire Light Infantry, and four days later returned to Scotland Yard at 8.45 a.m. for the purpose of being sworn in. In connection with the preliminaries to this process some of us protested against the official system of religious classification. "What religion?" said the inquiry clerk. "No religion," I replied firmly. "Come, come, you must have some religion," he urged. "Well, atheist, if you like," I said. "That isn't a religion," he said. I didn't want to clog the machine, so I said, "Well, you can call me a bit of a Unitarian, if you like." (After all, any one can be "a bit of a Unitarian.") "Well, I'll write in 'Unitarian' specially to oblige you," he said, "but *that* isn't really in the list either." As we don't attend Church Parade till we get our uniforms, I have not yet discovered what provision the Army makes for Unitarians. To avoid trouble I have decided in the last resort to go with the Presbyterians. But, seriously, why cannot an English soldier at this time of day be avowedly a Freethinker?

After being sworn in and receiving our first day's pay (one and ninepence), we were sent off to the regimental depot at P——, a train journey of some seven hours. Before starting we each received sixpence ration money, but sixpence does not go far in a railway refreshment-room. Fortunately, when we arrived at —— a committee of

ladies of the town provided us with an excellent supper at the station. After three cheers for our hosts, we marched up to the barracks, received a blanket, and then marched back to the local assembly rooms. There the Major in charge of the depot addressed us. He explained that the accommodation in the barracks was intended for less than two hundred men, but that over two thousand were on his hands. He appealed to us, for the sake of the honour of the regiment, not to wreck the hall—a feat which he evidently expected us to perform. Of course, the place was in a state of pandemonium even before the Major had finished, and when the lights were put out the high-spirited youth of Poplar and Stepney only substituted cat-calls for conversation across the hall. I did not expect a wink of sleep. But the noise did gradually subside, in spite of repeated cheers at the offer of a sergeant to fight any one who wanted to speak. Actually I slept well and woke to the sound of an impromptu game of football in the road outside. We fared better than the thousand or so recruits in the barracks, many of whom slept on the grass under trees. But those did best who, as they put it, " went in for a billeting job " in the town. For breakfast we obtained loaves of bread, torn up at ease on the grass, and rumours of butter and tea. The dinner was an excellent stew of beef and potatoes. Few of us could obtain knives or forks, but a hungry man can dispense with these. Tea a good many of us missed owing to the prolongation of the medical inspection, but for threepence one could buy an excellent meal of cocoa, corned beef, and bread in the canteen.

Every one wanted to get away from P——. We were lucky enough to spend only two nights there. Some of our comrades loafed and scrambled for food for five days. To the lay mind it is not clear why we were sent three hundred miles from London and then, equally unequipped and untrained, another two or three hundred miles to K——. But " you must all go through the depot "—there is no getting behind that. Arrived at K—— in a special train, we found ourselves almost the last detachment in a camp of 2,300 men, nearly all recruits

from London and Birmingham. The first night in the camp is as indelibly stamped on my memory as the first night in P——. Our party of ten friends had secured a tent to ourselves and were mostly asleep, when suddenly a head appeared in the aperture. "Who are you?" we asked. "Well, they calls me Joe," replied a voice, "but I am the Police. Are you all right?" "Yes, we're all right." "Have you got any whisky?" Unfortunately we hadn't. "What do the Police do at night?" I asked, being eager to lose no opportunity of extending my military knowledge. "Well," said Joe, "we mostly 'unts the bushes for women, and follers the sound of our own footsteps round the camp" And then followed an illuminating disquisition on the ins and outs of military discipline which kept us in roars of laughter for an hour, until Joe became rather too muddled and was finally induced to depart.

In the course of a fortnight we have certainly made some progress in the way of transformation from a rabble into a military unit. After two or three days the task of serious training began. Réveillé is at 6 a.m., parade at 7, breakfast at 8, morning parade from 9 to 1, and afternoon parade from 2 to 5. The training in Kitchener's Army must strike every one as being above all practical and to the point, at any rate in a battalion which is so fortunate in its nucleus of trained officers and sergeants as our own. Little time is wasted in ceremonial drill. The number of formal rifle exercises to be learned is reduced to an absolute minimum. Extended order drill, taking cover, and skirmishing are practised almost from the first day of training. And we are already becoming proficient in certain new movements which have been devised in order to meet special features of the tactics adopted by the Germans during the present war, and on which the commanding officer gave an excellent lecture to all officers and N.C.O.'s. Special arrangements are made for training fresh N.C.O.'s. The regimental sergeant-major, whom we all regard as the perfect type of soldier—and who is in addition almost the most perfect physical specimen of a man I have ever seen—instructs a special class of about

thirty lance-corporals and possible lance-corporals every afternoon and evening on such subjects as musketry, judging distance, patrols, and bivouacking. Judging distance, by the way, is the point upon which most emphasis is placed in our training, and we have all laid to heart the regimental sergeant-major's dictum that after this war it will be considered more important than accuracy in firing.

But the progress in the securing of discipline has on the whole been less than that in technical training. There is a perpetual chatter in platoons which are supposed to be standing or marching at attention, and a pestilent minority of slackers only intermittently trouble to keep in step on the march. Several men have taken French leave for two or three days, and only been punished by loss of pay. Probably a majority of the battalion would welcome a tightening up of discipline in most directions.

Much has been written about the hardships which have been suffered by the recruits. I cannot say that I think that any man in my battalion has experienced any physical hardship for which a recruit ought not to be prepared under existing conditions. The food is excellent, if somewhat monotonous. I have lived on it without spending more than a few pence a day on luxuries—as often as not consisting merely of a pennyworth or two of fruit. The only really serious criticisms which might be directed against the physical conditions under which we live relate to the sanitary arrangements. The non-commissioned officers have a healthy terror of enteric, but the lack of discipline in the battalion reflects itself in the failure to enforce the orders and instructions issued with a view to keep the camp healthy. One cannot help feeling that a little more zeal in the enforcement of sanitary rules and the provision of the means of enforcing them would be more to the point than the mechanical insistence on double inoculation against enteric. The arrangements for washing are also miserably inadequate. But there has been nothing really outrageous in any of these things. As far as concerns our battalion, indignation may best be reserved for the shameful delays in providing for the wives and

children of recruits owing to the failure to issue that strange fetish the regimental number, without which apparently no payments to dependents can be made. For a fortnight a constant stream of anxious men was inquiring of every one in authority about separation allowances. Fortunately, most of the families now seem to be receiving their allowances. It is to be hoped that the War Office has devised means for preventing the recurrence of such delays among the new units which are being created every week.

IN KITCHENER'S ARMY[1]

By a September Recruit (F. H. K.)

I

After three months of soldiering one is something of a veteran in the New Army. The last shadows of one's civilian past have long since faded away. For a month after enlisting I scarcely spoke to a civilian except occasionally to shop assistants or hawkers in the course of making small purchases. I have only once been away from camp for a night and slept in a bed. In so far as I think of the future at all it is on my possible experiences as a soldier that I reflect. But I have been too exhilarated to think. I have certainly never in my life experienced more continuous cheerfulness and—in the truest sense of the word—more happiness than in these three months. The sense of physical fitness; the exhilaration of a collective regimental life; the constant opportunities for the formation of new friendships with men of widely varying experiences; the congeniality of a life which is communistic in just the aspects in which communism is convenient and stimulating; the variety of the work (which does not seem to me personally to lose its sense of freshness and novelty to any extent), and last but not least, the humorous aspects of one's own and one's comrades' activities, all combine to expel the baneful elements

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 5 December, 1914.

of existence. I may possibly live to think differently; but at the present moment, assuming this war had to come, I feel nothing but gratitude to the gods for sending it in my time. Whatever war itself may be like, preparing to fight in time of war is the greatest game and the finest work in the world.

I may have been particularly fortunate in my experiences. I was lucky enough to become a lance-corporal after about a fortnight's service, a corporal a week later, and finally to find myself the only raw recruit in the sergeants' mess of my battalion, where active-service medals are the rule rather than the exception. And thus, in addition to going through the necessarily varied experiences of a compressed military training, I have found myself constantly undertaking various auxiliary jobs which no one so lately a civilian and with a glimmering of humour could fail to enjoy. Who, for instance, would not swell with pride, in spite of an inward smile at himself, when executing the duty of fetching a drunken deserter from a civilian police-station and marching him to the railway station under escort through the streets of Battersea? When your turn comes to act as battalion orderly sergeant a really exciting day is in store for you. The "B.O.," as he is familiarly termed, supervises the issue of all meals along with the orderly officer; and an enthusiast can find plenty to do in dealing with complaints, keeping orderly corporals and tent orderlies up to the mark, and so on. After breakfast you see that the sick get "fell in" by companies to the sound of a bugle, order them to spring smartly to attention, parade them before the medical officer, and watch carefully to see that those awarded "light duty" or "medicine and duty" do not slip through the meshes of the disciplinary net. But you reach the summit of your glory as B.O. when at 10.15 a.m. you proceed to accompany the commanding officer round camp. The second-in-command, the adjutant, the quartermaster, the regimental sergeant-major, the pioneer sergeant and the B.O. conduct a tour in every quarter of the camp, which amounts to an amateur, but severely practical, sanitary inspection. The talk is of coagula-

tions of flies, the pursuit of lice, ventilation, refuse disposal, and the general cleanliness of tents and lines—as regards which tent prizes for tidiness have achieved a certain measure of success.

But the office of battalion orderly sergeant is an ornamental sinecure compared with that of company orderly sergeant, which is held for a week continuously by each of the sergeants and full corporals in the company. The company orderly sergeant calls the roll at réveillé and at first post, and is responsible for reporting all absentees. This is no light task in a battalion of the New Army under canvas. The company orderly sergeant has further to warn personally all men who are placed on special duties and fatigues. I have had to hunt out as many as eighty men between 8.45 p.m. and 7 a.m. for this purpose. He also compiles lists of and hands out all passes at the hour at which they become effective—I have calculated that the value of my pay as sergeant, in cash, kind, and allowances, is considerably over two pounds a week, and have wondered at times whether I was not overpaid. But after a week as company orderly sergeant in a camp alternately boggy with rain and stiff with frost, I felt that my money was well earned.

The light infantry battalion to which I belong consists mainly of raw recruits from London and Birmingham, with a few score Welshmen, mostly miners, and a sprinkling of natives of the remote county which gives its name to our regiment. Including the forty odd sergeants there are over a hundred old or serving soldiers in the battalion. There are a fair number of men of middle-class origin in the ranks, and about ten of these have been given commissions, mostly in other battalions of the New Army. There are very noticeable differences between the characters of individual tents or individual platoons corresponding to the origin of the predominant type of men in them. For instance, my own platoon consists mainly of young clerks and mechanics, while the platoon which occupies the tents at the top of the lines is composed of a much rougher and possibly, in certain respects, tougher type of man. A battalion of recruits of the most hetero-

geneous type acquires a sense of unity and common pride in a very short time. But this is only one element in the creation of a trained military unit. How far we have really gone in the direction of becoming a fighting force comparable to British Regular Army standards I am not capable of judging. But we can certainly already be regarded as an actual military unit of some immediate value for fighting purposes, and if we spend the next two months in field work and in preparing for and firing another course of musketry, we should be capable of doing credit to the traditions of the British Army in the firing-line.

One not unimportant point in the organization of the New Army has been repeatedly impressed upon me ever since I enlisted. The policy of mixing a few score re-servists (other than sergeants or ex-non-commissioned officers likely to be capable of doing sergeant's work) with a battalion of raw recruits has not been justified by its results. There appear to have been two ideas underlying the policy. It is natural to assume that a sprinkling of veterans will stiffen the quality of a recently recruited fighting force on active service. And on paper it seems an excellent plan to keep a certain number of trained veterans in a new battalion for the purpose of undertaking the work of cooks, pioneers, sanitary squad, etc., and thus enabling the untrained men to be constantly on parade. But in practice these advantages prove to be very doubtful, and, in any case, are counterbalanced by the constant trouble caused by the old soldiers from the disciplinary point of view. The offences for which the old soldiers have been responsible have been out of all proportion to their number in the battalion. They have constantly been under arrest, mainly for drunkenness and for absence without leave, and it is certain that they have, directly and indirectly, made it more difficult to build up systematic discipline in the whole battalion. Moreover, it is not easy for an average young lance-corporal, acting as a section leader after perhaps two months' service, to control effectively two or three rough old soldiers who have come back after five or more years in civil life. The fact is that many of these men seem to possess the essential

qualities of the soldier to a less degree than many of the young recruits who have only served a few weeks. The youngsters, as often as not, shoot better and march better than the old hands. I do not wish to say a word against the better type of reservist, who is also represented in my own battalion. But it is difficult not to believe that these men could be used to the greatest advantage at the front or in battalions for home service consisting wholly of reservists, from whom men could be selected from time to time for the position of sergeants in the battalions of raw recruits in the New Army.

IN KITCHENER'S ARMY[1]

By a September Recruit (F. H. K.)

II

The grievances of the newly enrolled soldier have been freely and frankly discussed in the Press of late. I have already implied that I do not consider that I personally have any serious cause for complaint against the authorities. But there have been not a few cases even in my own battalion where men have suffered minor hardships and inconveniences which can hardly be regarded as irremediable. Take, for instance, the question of washing accommodation. During the last three weeks of our period under canvas an excellent rough-and-ready hot-water bathroom has been provided in the shape of a marquee equipped with a number of zinc baths and a boiler outside. But for the first two months of our life in camp it was impossible to obtain a hot-water bath except by waiting for perhaps half the evening at a crowded Soldiers' Home. The weekly compulsory visit to a swimming bath, where the water was often very definitely opaque as the result of contact with several hundred previous bathers, was scarcely an adequate substitute for a hot bath, and the opportunities for a splash in a cold tub in

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 12 December, 1914.

camp were not frequent. Although one is grateful for the practical arrangements eventually made, it seems unfortunate that the new recruit should have been left for two months entirely dependent upon private and philanthropic enterprise for an elementary essential of cleanliness.

I have very definitely formed the impression that drunkenness, or even excessive drinking in any sense, in the New Army is confined to a relatively small minority of the men in most battalions. And it is only a very tiny proportion of this minority of men who get drunk owing to any craving for alcohol or pleasure in the consumption of large quantities of it. The genuine alcoholist in the New Army is always a middle-aged man, and generally an old soldier. The men under thirty, whether serving soldiers or recruits, who drink to excess do so for three reasons: first and foremost, for lack of any intelligent interests or habits of recreation outside their work; secondly, owing to the prevalent notion that beer-swilling is a fine, expansive, John-Bullish, soldierly recreation; and, thirdly, owing to the custom of standing drinks, which at times undoubtedly adds to the congeniality of life, but as often as not is an irritating nuisance to any sensible man, whether he is the recipient or the donor of the drink in question. Obviously the first of the three causes of excessive drinking is, in the Army as everywhere else, by far the most important; and for that reason, among others, the provision of facilities for recreation and education is an all-important feature in the New Army, if only from the most narrowly military point of view. I frankly do not think that the superior authorities have done all that they could have done in this matter. They have rightly made the fullest use of voluntary effort; but voluntary effort, even including the gigantic enterprise of the Y.M.C.A., has fallen far short of the need.

In the important military centre of Colchester the task has perhaps been as adequately carried out as anywhere; which is attributable to the fact that the Town Council, under the energetic leadership of the Mayor, Alderman Marriage, has taken the lead in making provision for the

troops, and has incidentally published an invaluable guide to all the places of recreation, the foreign language classes, the bathrooms, etc., available for soldiers in the town. But where the local population was small in relation to the number of troops, and above all in the military centres far removed from any town, it was obviously the duty of the War Office to see that every soldier had at least an opportunity in the evening of finding a seat in a cheerful, brightly lighted tent or shed, where he was under no obligation to purchase alcohol and could obtain a decent cup of coffee (which the canteen contractors, in their rush for profits, as often as not did not find it worth while to provide). However, it is satisfactory to find that in the new camps of huts there are to be company recreation-rooms, and a site is even marked out for a cinema theatre. One only hopes that steps will also be taken to provide adequately for the small but not insignificant number of men serving in the ranks who, at least if a little encouragement were given, would be glad of an opportunity to attend some sort of classes in the evening, whether in French or German, European history, or some of the special branches of military knowledge, such as semaphore signalling, map reading, or first aid. There are thousands of young men now serving in the Army who, if the war had not broken out, would have been attending polytechnics, Workers' Educational Association classes, or evening schools of one kind or another, after a day's work often as hard as that which they are now carrying through in their new circumstances. And every effort ought certainly to be made to ensure that (apart from the invaluable education which life in the Army itself provides) the mental equipment of the tens of thousands of young men above the average in intelligence is not needlessly dulled through their experience of soldiering.

A good deal of the criticism of the arrangements made for the New Army has related to the all-important question of food. My own experience is that, as regards the quality of the provisions supplied by the authorities, there is no reasonable ground of complaint. When men have gone short, or have had uneatable food, the trouble has always

been due either to the organization for serving out and cooking food within the regiment or to groups of men scrambling for more than their fair share of food. The ordinary Army routine for serving out rations in camp is as follows : The company orderly corporal draws the rations from the battalion store or cookhouse and distributes them to the orderly men from each tent in his company. For this purpose the orderly men are paraded before each meal. The company and battalion orderly officers for the day are responsible for seeing that the routine is observed properly. Obviously any irregularity in the routine is almost certain to result in some men being deprived of their fair share of food. A second difficulty in the feeding of the troops arises from the cooking. As I have mentioned before, this work has mostly been relegated to old soldiers in order to enable recruits to be constantly on parade. The result has not been satisfactory ; and this must be attributed in part to the slackness and dirtiness of the subordinate cooks, since making tea and the simple stewing and roasting of meat on camp fires or in field ovens require no technical knowledge beyond what is supplied by the sergeant cook.

But I believe that probably the most important source of complaints about food in the New Army is due to an apparently trivial point which can scarcely be fully appreciated by any one who has not had some experience of camp life in the Army. It is useless to supply good rations, to give technical instruction to cooks, and to make elaborate arrangements for the distribution of food if the camp kettles (so-called " dicksies ") in which tea, cocoa, soup, potatoes, and stews are all cooked are not kept clean. In point of fact, in many camps it has been the rule rather than the exception to find each meal unpleasantly reminiscent of the last—one's tea, for instance, tastes strongly of onions or is swimming with the mutton fat of the last dinner. Now, if each tent (or in the new camps each hut) had its own numbered or labelled camp kettles, this objectionable feature of Army catering would automatically disappear, because the men in each tent or hut would take effective steps to compel their orderlies (taken in

rotation from among themselves) to wash up properly. As it is, any tent has been liable to have its tea served in a kettle which has not been properly cleaned for days because the tent orderlies through whose hands it passed have preferred the luxury of a quiet smoke after dinner to the rather unpleasant task of scrubbing out a greasy kettle with probably inadequate materials—trusting to luck with regard to getting some one else's clean kettle for tea. I am prepared to uphold the thesis that the numbering or labelling of camp kettles with a view to assigning them to definite groups of men is one of the most important reforms which could be carried out in the British Army at the present time for the purpose of improving the food and thereby the physical and fighting efficiency of hundreds of the new units.

But once one has had the good fortune to enter the sergeants' mess the trouble of the daily distribution of food no longer affects one, since even under canvas one enjoys the luxury of sit-down meals at a table. The sergeants' mess of the British Army is one of the many English social institutions which have developed a mass of vital traditions scarcely known outside the classes which come immediately into contact with them.

I shall never forget how one sergeant (who was a complete stranger to me) said to me on the day on which I had just received my stripes: "You know, a corporal might often be glad to see another corporal make a fool of himself; but sergeants always try to help each other out." Whether or no this way of stating the case involves a libel on corporals, it certainly represents the spirit which I have almost invariably found amongst the sergeants. Another point in the sergeants' mess which is striking to any one who has been familiar with Public School and University life is the tolerance of eccentricity or individuality in matters which do not directly affect a man's duties as a soldier. Perhaps here, again, the exceptional atmosphere of a sergeants' mess in a new battalion in wartime does not provide a fair criterion; but I have certainly gained the impression that the standards of good form in the sergeants' mess throughout the Army do not involve the

narrow spirit of hostility to most forms of intelligent initiative in conduct which characterizes a common type of English Public School. I have certainly never felt more at home among any body of men than I have in my regimental sergeants' mess, though I am about as unsergeant-like a type of person as could be found. If it is my good fortune to come back safe and sound from over the water after the war, it is the sergeants' mess which will form the centre of the memories of my military past.

ON THE EVE [1]

By a Sergeant of the First New Army (F. H. K.)

I

When "No parade to-day" sounded the other day at the conclusion of the inter-divisional manœuvres my work as scout sergeant had taken me some distance from my own detachment. The enemy, numbering two divisions in opposition to our one, had succeeded in forcing their way between two of our brigades, which had advanced along parallel roads, and had completely outflanked my own, the central brigade. I hastened to begin my march home, expecting to fall in with one or the other of the battalions in my brigade later on. As I hurried along I passed a considerable number of troops, most of whom were basking in the delicious afternoon sunshine on the roadside or in the fields, awaiting the order to form up. They belonged to all parts of the country—men of the North and the Midlands, East Anglians, and Cockneys—and were probably a fair sample of the First New Army. The sight of them gave one a thrill of pride. They looked as tough, well-set-up, and hearty a body as any man could wish to fight with. There is no doubt whatever that in physique and in enthusiasm the first "Kitchener" Army could hardly be surpassed. Everywhere one sees the same thing and hears the same story—continual grumbling at the delay in getting into the firing-line.

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 29 May, 1915.

It goes without saying that this discontent is merely a temporary phase, important only as a symptom of the spirit of the New Armies. The public, taking that spirit for granted, is perhaps more concerned to know, not what Kitchener's Army feels like and thinks of itself, but what is its real military quality as a disciplined force. What can the 120,000 men of the First New Army do that they could not do nine months ago? To begin with, they are capable of infinitely greater physical endurance. There is little doubt that in this respect they would prove superior even to the original Expeditionary Force which fought at Mons—for two reasons. In the first place, the New Army is more sober than the old. And in the second, the original Expeditionary Force included large numbers of Reservists who were called straight up from civilian life. These were the men whose feet went to pieces in the retreat from Mons—it is extraordinary that most of them lasted as well as they did. We of the First New Army, on the other hand, have had nine months of hard continuous training, and we shall never be fitter than we are. We have learned to march, to bivouac, to cook our own dinners in mess-tins over a fire of a few sticks, and, last but not least, to wait for hours in every variety of weather by day or night. We have had experience of life under canvas, in huts, and in billets. Our musketry is good, but not on the average as good as that of the old Regular Army, though we have plenty of crack shots. Our specialists, such as signallers and machine-gunners, are thoroughly trained and keen. Our drill on the barrack square is not generally up to the standard of the Old Army, but when we turn out for an inspection and really put our minds to the job, I think we can do a march-past or a rifle movement as well as a line battalion. A plethora of mimic warfare has made us perhaps rather more careless in such matters as taking cover than we were six months ago; but a breath of reality will alter that.

Incidentally, the important part which athletics have played in the training of the New Army is worth noting. Cross-country running, football, and boxing have encouraged physical development, bred *esprit de corps*, and

relieved the monotony of life. Some weeks ago I had the good fortune to win a medal in a cross-country run of seven miles in which there were five hundred competitors out of a single division. The King's presence at the race was briefly noticed in the Press; and German papers, misunderstanding the reference, jeered at the British Monarch for attending a horse-race meeting in time of war. If a few Teutonic journalists could have witnessed the scene, there might perhaps be less nonsense talked in Germany about the quality and spirit of the New English Army. Anyway, I wish our division could take on five hundred German recruits in a seven-mile team race.

As regards discipline, it is hard to speak. The discipline of the New Armies is different from that of the old Regular Army because the conditions are different. One of the natural bases of discipline, the subordination of rank to rank more or less according to seniority of service, is necessarily absent in battalions composed almost entirely of men who enlisted *en masse* as raw recruits. The great majority of the men who are now non-commissioned officers knew no more than the other recruits when they joined. Their authority (apart from legal powers of coercion, which in the hands of a fool will not suffice in any army in the world to secure the instinctive obedience which is discipline) therefore depends almost solely upon their inherent capacity and the goodwill of their subordinates. Discipline, of course, varies a good deal from one battalion to another in Kitchener's Army—as it does, by the way, in the Regular Army, where the differences between English and Irish regiments or between Guards and some of the line regiments are particularly striking. The differences in the New Army are largely due to the personal idiosyncrasies of officers commanding companies and battalions. But they are also attributable to the varying extent to which old Army N.C.O.'s are scattered through the new units. From accounts which I have heard of the more recently formed battalions of Kitchener's Army, I should say that in some respects there is at the present moment less difference from the point of view of discipline and military spirit between the old Regular Army and the

First New Army than there is between the First New Army and these new battalions of the later New Armies. Undoubtedly, there has been an enormous improvement during the past few months, and the chief difference that still remains in this respect between a First Army battalion and a Regular battalion is perhaps that the personal factor in the maintenance of discipline counts for more in the former than in the latter. Much therefore depends upon the N.C.O.'s of the New Armies, and as one of them I may be regarded as a prejudiced witness, but I do not think they will fail. On the contrary, I cannot help feeling that the New Army sergeants and corporals, taken as a whole, will prove an extraordinarily valuable military asset. They are naturally the pick of the autumn recruits. They have been selected purely by merit, and the field of selection was exceptional in quality and quantity alike. The result, therefore, ought to be good, and I believe it is. Nor have the non-commissioned ranks been depleted to any marked extent to supply officers to more recently formed units. Probably almost any New Army N.C.O. would be prepared to accept a commission if he were definitely asked to do so on patriotic grounds; but unless he is asked he generally prefers to stay where he is. As regards my own battalion (which at the present moment contains four University men amongst the N.C.O.'s), nearly all the score or so of men who have left the ranks to take commissions have been privates or at most lance-corporals. And so, I understand, it has been elsewhere. The New Army sergeants and full corporals have practically all been content with their position.

Personally, I feel that a sergeant has as wide and useful a scope for work as a subaltern, and I find the social aspects of regimental life in the New Army more congenial than ever. Take a battalion like my own, which is made up of every class, from unskilled labourers to professional men. Now that under strict active service conditions our sergeants' mess is for the moment abolished, I sit down to meals with a brass-caster, a railway porter, a sugar-boiler, a bricklayer, an engine-cleaner, an "oyster-man" (i.e., a man who serves behind an oyster bar in

Shaftesbury Avenue), a tailor, and several clerks and warehousemen of various types; and there is nothing forced or difficult in the association. We are all "here because we're here," as our marching song says. It has been inconvenient at times in the past to sleep in the same tent with a miscellaneous collection of men, a minority of whom were prepared to appropriate, and on occasion did appropriate, one's boots in order to obtain the price of a few drinks. But on the whole, during the past nine months I have certainly found life as pleasant as at any other period of my existence and as much, or more, worth living.

For there is no doubt that the bugle calls gradually eat into one's soul. The habits of a military communal life become a second nature. After all, the regiment is a home and a mother to us. It feeds us and clothes us and provides us with healthy work, comradeship, and opportunities for enjoyable leisure. Indeed, I sometimes think that the ritual of everyday regimental life—the parading of orderly men for rations or of orderly sergeants on "staff parade," the morning bugle calls of réveillé, retreat, and last post, guard-mounting, ceremonial duties, and so on—comes nearer than anything else in modern society to that theology-less religion of social ritual about which Miss Jane Harrison writes so convincingly in her "Alpha and Omega." It takes the episodes of our daily collective life and gives them a dignity—in fact, almost a dramatic form. And it would be difficult to find a ritual more calculated to call forth in one a thrill of collective emotion than a big ceremonial parade—as, for instance, when our whole brigade marched past the Minister for War the other day in columns of platoons. It may seem ridiculous, but I certainly never in my life felt more wrapped up in the flood of collective humanity than on that occasion. Perhaps I am more of an enthusiast than most, or, rather, more conscious of what is happening to me and to those around me; but it is unquestionably a fact that the battalions and even the brigades of the First New Army are no longer mere congeries of men. They have their collective souls. They are more living, corporate entities than any bodies corporate with hundreds of years of history behind them.

Two impressions about myself are uppermost in my mind on the eve of leaving England with a prospect of stiff fighting in a very few weeks, perhaps in a few days. In the first place, my mind is more alert and keen than ever in my life before. I am nothing of a philosopher in the technical sense of the term, but I find myself continually reflecting on the mysteries of life and time and the reality behind things as they seem. I have even made some headway with Bergson's *L'Evolution Créatrice*, which I am carrying to France on my back. (I was prejudiced against him before by the way he has been seized on by certain religious sects, political reactionaries, emotional syndicalists, *et hoc genus omne*. But Wilkes was no Wilkite !) If only the war lasts long enough and I don't get knocked out, I shall have much clearer notions on these subjects than I ever should have had otherwise. In the second place, all my enthusiasm about fighting has come to centre round my connection with my own regiment and brigade. I suppose I could take root somewhere else in the Army if I *had* to, but to part from my battalion would be to break one of the strongest ties I have ever known. This feeling has taken many months to grow up. At first one knew and felt little beyond the restricted circle of one's platoon. Gradually first one's company, then one's battalion, and finally one's brigade and division become living realities. Nine months ago I enlisted from a number of motives—general patriotism, indignation at the invasion of Belgium, enthusiasm for the principle of nationality, and sheer egotistical adventurousness. But now all my feelings about my own country and the rights and wrongs of this war seem to have been, as far as my everyday emotional life is concerned, absorbed in the sentiment of attachment to my own battalion and brigade. I don't personally bother about hating Germans ; and patriotic and humanitarian sentiment only stirs me consciously at distant intervals. The thoughts that habitually rouse me to a desire of coming through this job tolerably creditably are the honour of my own battalion and its opinion of me. Those are now my sustaining motives in this game of war.

CHAPTER IX

APRIL TO DECEMBER, 1915

To R. C. K. Ensor

6th D.C.L.I.,
Maida Barracks, Aldershot.
April, 1915.

We are expecting to move very shortly now. We have been on a trek, including a night's bivouacking, and have had rather a rough time altogether for the last fortnight.

This last business in Flanders seems to have been a nasty knock. These battles seem to get more and more unpleasant from an infantryman's point of view. If asphyxiating gases are going to be part of the ordinary game in future, the prospect is decidedly vile. It certainly would be more satisfactory to go anywhere rather than to Flanders. At the same time, I suppose the Germans will continue to break through there, and somebody must do the dirty work of plugging the hole. I wonder why there are still French on our left. You would think that the Belgians and ourselves ought to be able to cover all the ground from the coast down to our right now.

Thank you very much for your kind offer to get me anything. I think I have all I want now—some one has just sent me a torch. I shall get some leather gloves—I think they might be useful. But I am carrying more than any one else in the battalion already—every ounce seems to tell when you get up to about 60 or 70 lb.

I shall look forward to a pleasant talk in about eighteen months' time.

I hope the new infant goes on well. It looks splendid. I am damned glad I got a couple of kids before going off to the wars.

To E. S. P. Haynes.

6TH D.C.L.I.,
MAIDA BARRACKS, ALDERSHOT.
May, 1915.

. . . Rupert Brooke's death seems a peculiarly tragic episode. I have felt it the more as we started soldiering together when the war broke out. It has intensified my conviction that I shall not come back—or rather my expectation—for the feeling has no rational basis and I can imagine myself analysing it with interest after the war. Still, it is there. I wonder if most men who think and have not been accustomed to face Death before have it when they go on active service.

. . . . . .

Many thanks for writing to stir me up about the will. I have now completed it, and enclose it herewith along with all the relevant papers. . .

We have had an embarkation leave, and I expect we shall be off in a few days now. I think this battalion will fully maintain the honour of our regiment—you will have seen French's reference to the Cornwalls. I hope to have many more jovial meals with you in the future; and if there *is* a Valhalla by any chance and I find my way there before you, I will keep a place for you at the festive board and sample the brews for you in advance. . . .

To Mrs. Hubback (Miss Eva Spielmann).

ALDERSHOT 15 *May*, 1915.

Yes, it is only a matter of a wire to our Divisional Headquarters, hourly expected now.

I hope I shall come back, it would be very interesting, but I don't hope for any more life. I shall be very grateful to Fate if I get it. Have just been reading Jane Harrison's "Essays" and have begun Bergson in French as a result. I was prejudiced against him owing to the way he is seized on by Christians, anti-rationalists, and reactionaries of all kinds, including the newest brands of revolutionaries, but I wanted badly to get my mind on to some philosophical thinking. I never felt more convinced in all my

life that the chances are a thousand to one that things as we see them for purposes of daily life are not things as they really are. That is trite philosophy, but when one comes to think it habitually it becomes important. And so I like to feel vaguely out behind time and the shadows of things as they seem.

Soldiering in springtime has been very pleasant. I feel very tough and fit.

Kitchener inspected the 43rd Brigade a few days ago. We marched past in column of platoons. I never felt so mad with emotion in all my life. The ritual of the Army beats that of the Christian Church any day. In fact, the ritual of soldiering comes nearer a decent civic religion than anything else I know. It is a queer thing that I should have found the social and emotional environment that suits me best in the Army. I wonder if I could ever find a family an adequate substitute for a regiment. If I do come back from the war I shall want to keep up a bit of soldiering as long as I can. I feel as if I couldn't live for evermore without bugle calls. They have eaten into my soul.

Of course I have experienced all the advantages of war for nine months. Now I am to come up against the horrors—pretty badly perhaps. I get very depressed at this German-baiting and spirit of hatred. I can't help feeling the Germans had something of a case about the *Lusitania,* for instance, horrible as it may seem and although I think they were very foolish to sink her.

Well, good-bye. I shall always be glad of a line from you. Give me any news of Joan and Bernard and Diana. I wonder if Joan will remember me.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. *27 May,* 1915.

My first week of warfare has been a delightful picnic—two days in a splendid camp over the sea, three days in an idyllic French Flemish village, then two days of easy marching towards the firing-line. Our village where we stopped three days was one of the most charming typically Flemish places you can imagine. The people all over

here mostly speak Flemish naturally. The kids learn French first in the schools. I found a Belgian Fleming working in the village who could hardly speak French. I got on with him by speaking my few words of Dutch mixed in with German where I didn't know the Dutch. We have just got into the area where there are odd detachments of armies in the firing-line and where also there was fighting with the Germans last year. Weather delightful all the time. Since Sunday night we have been hearing the big guns in the distance.

Well, we are living like fighting-cocks and enjoying a continental tour at the Government's expense. That is all that war means so far, except for the boom of the guns, which has just come to my ear again as I lie in this pleasant meadow girt with pollarded elms. We sleep in barns on straw, absolutely the best bed in the world.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 16 *June*, 1915.

Have just come out of the trenches for two days after two days in. It was a pretty warm corner. We went for instruction with our 1st Battalion. I happened to be close by when two of the 6th Battalion fellows were shot through the head. I am glad to get away for a bit to another very pleasant camp by a large village with a fresh flowing brook where you can get water for washing. Our 1st Battalion have been in these trenches for fifty-two days: it is as hot a place as you can find along the line, but it is good to get instruction from such excellent fellows. I am specializing on bomb-throwing now; in fact, my scouts are being turned into a bomb-throwing squad. One did not expect to become a British Grenadier when one went in for soldiering. You can do a lot with bombs in this hand-to-hand fighting, but it seems a rum way of settling international affairs. I was sitting for some time at the end of a sap within fifteen yards of the Germans. The trenches run very close together where our 1st Battalion are—even when you are out of the trenches in the bivvies (dugouts) just behind, the bullets come through the trees over your head all the time, making a beastly

row as they go through the tree trunks. We were awakened on Sunday morning by the Germans having a bit of a hate in the form of shelling our wood. You could hear the whizz for a second or so before the explosion came, and of course every one kept under cover in the bivvies. This is a delightful village where we now are. You can't imagine how one's spirits went up as we marched here in the early hours between one and six a.m., once we were out of the range of stray bullets. It was a relief to feel oneself out of the regular death area. I am becoming quite attached to this part of Flanders, which is slightly undulating, not absolutely flat like the part more to the north and west. The meadows and fields around the camp slope gradually down to the brook, and the A.S.C. Camp which adjoins ours is quite picturesque, with the horses and wagons and little bivouacs made of waterproof sheets, surrounded by rows of tall trees with bare trunks after the regular French and Belgian style. The brier roses are blossoming in the hedges just as, I suppose, they are in England. It was rather pathetic to find a cottage garden with gooseberry and currant bushes and blossoming roses only a couple of hundred yards behind the point where our rifles were cracking. The cottage itself was smashed to pieces. I picked a red rose and meant to enclose it, but I think it has got broken in my pack. The Belgians here are delighted when they find one tries to *sprecken Vlaams* and compliment one most profusely on one's efforts.

To R. C. K. Ensor.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
Monday, 28 June, 1915.

Many thanks for your p.c. Am going on fit and strong. My brigade is now doing duty in the trenches for the first time, but my battalion happens to be in reserve, so we are living in dugouts and in the vaults of a brewery in the ruins of a famous town. The scene is extraordinary. I go for peace to read and write in the ruins of a church opposite. There are generally shells exploding a few score yards off and our batteries replying very near by.

We have done two instructional spells in the trenches; as luck would have it, a lot of us went to our own 1st Battalion, who are in a very hot place and lose about five or six men daily on the average. Saps go down to within fifteen yards of the Germans. I had two of our men shot through the head close by me on my second day up. We had a good few casualties during these two spells and when digging trenches close behind the front line, of which we have done a good deal. Our job in reserve now is mostly carrying rations, water, etc., for the battalion linked with us in the brigade, which is doing front-line duty in a whole new trench newly made after an advance —the one they took from the Germans was too full of dead bodies to use.

I am now battalion bomb sergeant—every one is going in increasingly for the use of grenades in this close trench warfare.

Writing this in the vault by candle-light at mid-day.

. . . . .

There is not a single house here anything like complete. I hope they will put a ring fence round the place and keep it as a memorial of what war is.

This is not a life for any one with anything like nerves —three men have already broken down in our battalion— but I don't see myself coming to any harm by it unless by the inevitable bullet or shell or bomb. (Trench mortars are about the most bloody things in the trenches.)

As far as I can judge we shall very likely escape epidemics and disease out here. The sanitary discipline and arrangements, though rough, are pretty good—though I think there is still room for improvement in the training and teaching of the New Armies in this respect.

Should be awfully glad to hear your views of the prospects and progress of the war as a whole from time to time, if you can spare time to write.

I don't see a great deal of use in this " National Register." Some good, no doubt, will be got from it, but it is mostly the outcome of very crude thinking as far as I can see. I hope more keenly than ever we beat the Germans without

conscription. It would be a great moral achievement. That is, of course, not an overwhelming argument against conscription, but it has weight. . . .

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F.

IN A DUGOUT JUST BEHIND THE FIRING-LINE.

29 *July*, 1915.

I have been in the battle—I think it is pretty well a battle, which you will read about in the papers—and I am wounded, but not badly. We stood to in our rest-camp at 4.30 this morning. The big guns had been going some time. We marched about three or four miles and then halted. The news came of the German attack with liquid fire. Then another brigade of our Division sent to ask our regiment for bombers to detonate—that is, to prepare for exploding—three or four hundred bombs. I took three of my four sections up to their Brigade Head-quarters and did the job. At first they proposed to send us as a separate detachment to the firing-line to replace the bombers of a regiment which had suffered badly, but the Major commanding now, as our Colonel was wounded in the trenches last week, wanted to keep us, so we rejoined our battalion about 11.45, finding our way to a given point on the map. Then we went up to supports and were shelled heavily all the way up. One company officer was killed and several men wounded. At 2 p.m. our batteries started giving them hell. They replied. We were near the firing-line then and things were warm, but the great thing to keep you cool and happy is to have something to do. I could never have lived through the nine days in the trenches last time if I had not been worked to death day and night. We waited in a support trench half an hour. My bombers had got mixed up with the company's, but there were enough to make a unit. I was ordered to lead the second party which went up to support the firing-line. I led my men across a field which had been heavily shelled just before, but fortunately we got none. We reported to the 8th Rifle Brigade C.O. in the wood; he sent us on to the right; shells were

falling everywhere. I passed several men dead or horribly wounded; less wounded men were wending their way back to the dressing station. I felt cheerful nevertheless, really a sort of tinge of joy of battle in spite of the hellishness of it all, though you can't get a real joy of battle in these artillery days. Then suddenly I heard a specially loud crash and fell, seeing "red," and thinking, "Am I going to die? This is not so bad as I thought it would be; let me get the thing tied up before I suffer from loss of blood," which I could feel and see a good deal of. As I rushed to an officer and asked him to do me up, I thought, "What a coward I am, not looking to my corporal!" who was wounded next to me. However, there was no arterial bleeding—I learnt about this at our M.O.'s lectures on First Aid. I had got about four cuts on the back of the head and neck, and slight cuts on ear and hand, and various bruises on legs and arms. The officer did me up, and I reminded him of the iodine, which he forgot at first. Then I came back to the dressing station, a little ashamed of not going back to the firing-line. It was awfully difficult to say whether one was bad enough not to go back; however, they all said I mustn't go back, so I came here. It isn't a "Blighty," I am pretty sure, so I shan't see you yet, and shall be back to have another smack at them with Ticklers' artillery soon. I am not sure whether it was a shell itself or whether a shell fragment hit one of the bundles of bombs we were carrying up and exploded them. The only trouble now is if one will get down all right. The shelling has died away a bit now, though they are still exploding uncomfortably near this dugout. There are contrary rumours as to whether we have taken the lost trenches or not—the ones we took from the Germans about the middle of June and lost a week ago—anyhow, if I post this letter you will know I am all right—I have suffered no pain really.

Later, 10.30 *p.m. Dressing station.*

Have been dressed properly and expect to go off to the casualty clearing station in a few hours, and meanwhile I will try and get a "kip." I have had a very lucky escape

and I feel I have done some good work to-day. They ran short of bombs last night. I got 350 up to them, and although at least ten out of my fifty-five bombers were knocked out by 5 p.m. and I never chucked one bomb myself, I have left some good men up there who will do fine work when required.

I shall be all right very soon.

Saturday morning: On ambulance train to Boulogne or somewhere. They keep on finding little bits of shell all over me. I have been inoculated against tetanus and am sleepy and happy.

To E. S. P. Haynes.

LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS' MOBILE HOSPITAL, B.E.F.
1 *August*, 1915.

Here I am very comfortably in bed in a hospital a few miles from the coast. I was wounded slightly in the battle at Hooge, east of Ypres, on Friday, and was, as I have been on several occasions, extraordinarily lucky. . .

I thought of you this morning on reading the report in yesterday's paper of the action in the Court of Appeal with a view to upsetting the gift of £10,000 to the Secular Society. The Master of the Rolls' comments on the subject of blasphemy and religious liberty seem to have been rather good. Who the devil brought the action? Some confounded Christian organization, I suppose. No doubt you have seen about the incident. Could you do something to show up whoever brought the action? If I were in England I would ferret it out and make a row.

To J. C. Squire.

LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS' MOBILE HOSPITAL, B.E.F.
7 *August*, 1915.

. . . I am, unlike a lot of people out here, genuinely hard-worked. That is to say it is quite a job for me to get an hour to myself. I am doing an officer's and sergeant's work for sixty men, and in addition do quartermaster-sergeant for 150 men (the Headquarters' detachments—i.e. bombers, machine-gunners, signallers, etc.) when

we are out of the trenches. Then the *Red Feather* [1] takes up no small amount of time—arranging for distribution, collecting addresses for posting to and collecting money and sending it to England is as much bother as the writing and editing. This time, as you have seen, a good proportion comes from my pen—"Ypres," "Bivviarchitecture," the Notes, and the account of our meeting with the 1st Battalion.

I can't mention the name of this place, although I saw a description of it by name in the *Times* or the *Telegraph* the other day! However, I can tell you that it is a mile from the sea. One has a glorious view of it from the last chalk ridge which runs into the sand-hills. One looks across a backwater and a wooded sand-hill ridge to a little red seaside resort with two lighthouses—which keep on reminding me in an absurd way of the minarets of Scutari. Over the ridge, and beyond the red houses, is the sea. Turning half-right, you can see the mouth of the backwater, formed of low tapering sandbanks—enclosing a few fishing-boats, and then the open sea beyond. The skies have mostly been grey since I came here. Grey and blue seem to dominate all other colours; the green of the woods on the sand ridges and of the vegetation on the stretches of sand is so subdued.

It is the first time this summer that I have had a chance of enjoying a landscape in the old way. One does enjoy scenery, of course, when campaigning—I had a most picturesque view of Poperinghe over the corn and hop fields and trees from the entrance of my bivvy in the last camp. But everything up there is under the shadow of the big gun. One lives—enjoys life full-bloodedly and even thinks and feels æsthetically now and again—but having come away, one knows that there was a special abnormal tinge over the whole of life.

I really have hopes of a big democratic international outburst against war. After six or seven months in and near the firing-line, I am sure that the English, French, Belgians, and Italians would respond to it. The only question is the Germans. And I can't help having hopes

[1] His regimental paper.

even of them—if only we don't humiliate them too much. The Austro-German Alliance is an example of how a generous peace does pay. We must definitely defeat the Germans, or at the least very definitely defeat their aggression—even that is not nearly done yet, in spite of the habitual phrases of the English newspapers. But having done that, I am for all possible generosity—in spite of all atrocities and barbarities.

I am afraid there is little chance of this view being adopted. I think I am more for generosity than the *Statesman* is at the moment. But, of course, it is really too early to discuss the point semi-academically. The demand for a public discussion of the terms of peace now is too childish for words—even from a Pacifist point of view.

This business of fighting depends to a tremendous extent on one's moods. I think I am more cheerful at it than most. I have never been depressed since I came out here, except for the third and fourth days in this hospital, when I got a fit of funk and dread of the firing-line. But I know I am all right again now, and shall be righter if possible when I am back there. After all, it's just a game of dice with Death. She has to win a lot of throws to get you beat, and (at least in the eyes of a good atheist) the dice aren't loaded.

The great thing to keep you going is to be busy. And so I am likely to keep going without much difficulty, for I somehow always manage to be busy and always see undone work immediately ahead of me.

Tell Randall that the soldier with the brown beard is coming to see him again some day. . . .

To Mrs. Hubback.

LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS' HOSPITAL.
8 *August*, 1915.

This is to let you know that I am quite all right again after a week in hospital and expect to be back at duty very soon. . . . I never suffered any pain. I was lucky to be knocked out soon after my battalion got up there. I don't think we have more than half a dozen officers left

and probably half the men in action were wiped out. It was all shell fire in the part where I was, in a wood. I never saw a German. In the original attack which they made early in the day they used liquid fire for the first time against the English. . . .

God, how one will value and enjoy life if one does have the luck to survive the war! You can't think what the simple luxuries mean to one. I tasted a good bit of roast beef to-day for the first time for months. You can't imagine the rough standard of physical civilization one sinks to when one has slept on the ground almost without intermission for months, eaten and drunk out of a dirty tin, chased lice or tried to chase them out of one's clothes as a matter of course every few days, and not used a handkerchief for God knows how long. The excellent baths one gets after coming out of the trenches are the one thing that keeps one on a somewhat higher level.

I don't think people realize the difference between the officers' and common soldiers' lot out here. The difference in regard to hardships endured is enormous. That is the chief thing which makes a commission distasteful to me. One doesn't grudge it to the company officers, but I think the subalterns get more than their share of comfort, though I daresay that their health rate entitles them to a bit more. And one does not blame the individuals; it is just the system that is obnoxious in a democratic age.

I was a bit irritated just before I got wounded at some incidents in a small town near where we were lying. Officers could go there freely; *we* had to get passes and could only get a limited number. Then when we got there and tried to get a simple meal, poached eggs and coffee, at a restaurant, one was put off with excuses, while all the time the young officers, not of the most attractive class, were enjoying a jolly good feed. This happened to me and also to some of my men on a separate occasion. When one had just come out of the trenches, up to which men already overloaded with their equipment had had to carry special bags of rations and whisky for officers through communication trenches with water up to their knees, one felt a bit sick. I am afraid the language that

I and a Radical fellow-sergeant used about officers on our way back to camp was decidedly " detrimental to good order and military discipline."

However, I have known officers' rations go astray in the trenches. Some day, if I come back, I can tell you some amusing yarns about that. I will omit them now, in case a Censor reads so far.

. . . . .

I am extraordinarily fit now and am really very lucky to get this rest. What with frequent nocturnal digging expeditions when out of the trenches and training bomb-throwers, one doesn't get a great deal of rest, and sleep *in* the trenches, at any rate in trenches in the Ypres salient, is not exactly easy to obtain.

I hope the children are flourishing. I should like to be able to have a talk to you. I feel as if I should talk for days on end if Fate took me back to Blighty.

To R. C. K. Ensor.

LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS' MOBILE HOSPITAL, B.E.F.
11 *August*, 1915.

It really amounts to something pretty near a continuous battle in (at any rate a large portion of) the trenches in the Ypres salient. You go " in " for a week, expecting to lose from fifty to a hundred and fifty men, without making or repelling an attack. We (i.e. my battalion) lost fifty-six, including five or six killed, in eight days, and were considered lucky. Big shells, whizz-bangs, trench mortars, rifle grenades, and bullets all take their toll—and hand grenades too in places like the barriers of " international trenches " (generally old communication trenches which formerly were wholly within the lines of one side or the other, but, owing to an advance, run across from one fire-trench to the other and are barricaded generally by both sides at two or more points). The barriers of the international trenches are generally manned by bombers. Of course, the international trench also serves as a starting-point from which to make a lateral sap and so secure an advanced fire-trench—it saves you

the trouble of making a preliminary sap at right angles (roughly) to your own fire-trench and also the risk of detection while making such a preliminary sap.

Life in the trenches—at any rate all round the Ypres salient—is by no means a matter of sitting or standing still on guard, varied by sniping. There is endless work improving and repairing trenches, making dug-outs, bomb-stores (frequently carelessly made and occasionally blown up by a casual bit of shell), working at saps (under direction of R.E.'s) and mines (by which of course one means the underground tunnel as distinguished from the open sap—though the terms " sap " and " mine " are sometimes used loosely as equivalents). I scarcely ever got over four hours' sleep in the twenty-four for the eight days which I did in the fire-trench in the third week in July. The companies did four days in the fire-trench and four in supports, and I had practically all my sixty bomb-throwers up the whole time. There was an awful lot of work for us to do, partly owing in a roundabout way to the fact that our brigade worked the trenches in a different way to the brigade we took over from. The other brigade had only two battalions up at once; whereas we had three up. So we had to take over fragments of two battalions' lines instead of having simply to take over from one battalion (I expect it means that our brigade had the same number of companies in the firing-line as the other—I never tried to calculate it exactly—though each battalion had a different in-and-out system). Anyway it was a damned nuisance to me, as I had to make a new central bomb-store, etc. My officer had nearly blown himself up—lost his right hand and nearly lost a leg—in a horrible bomb accident just before we went up, so I have since been in sole charge of our bomb-throwing department and had no end of work.

Three days after we had come out we got the order to stand to at 4.30 a.m. in our rest camp, and soon after moved off to help another brigade of our Division against that bloody liquid-fire attack. You will have seen the account of my experience on that day. I was devilish lucky—in not being killed and in being knocked out pretty

early on. My battalion did not get relieved till about thirty hours after I was knocked out. And I believe our Division has been in this additional fighting in the same place, reported in yesterday's paper. The bombers went up fifty-five strong on the day when I was wounded. Nineteen men were laid out—none, I believe, killed—before they left, and I think we fared better proportionately than the battalion as a whole.

I have nothing wrong with me now except one or two small sore lumps on the head—still containing tiny pieces of shell, which are not worth the trouble of cutting out—and an apparently permanently enlarged and rather sore knuckle. I expect I shall carry said bits of shell as a memento of Flanders to my grave; none of these things are of any serious inconvenience or enough to affect my value as an effective fighting unit. . . .

I am a little depressed about the mechanical equipment and detailed trench tactics of the British Army out here. Shells and artillery are all right as far as I can judge—my opinion on this, of course, is not based on any personal knowledge. But I don't think we pay nearly enough attention to the details of trench warfare. The Germans are not so wonderfully clever at it. The tricks of trench warfare are mostly of the schoolboy hide-and-seek level, from the intellectual point of view. But having once discovered a really successful trick—probably an almost childish stratagem—you want to exploit it systematically for all it is worth. That is what the Germans do well and what we don't do well. I realized this the more as I lived in what had been a German trench for the last eight days that I was " up " and occupied a German dug-out, wore a German pair of boots when I saw the chance of having dry feet at least for a few hours—but of course, they got soaked too—ate out of a German canteen, and generally helped myself to all sorts of conveniences from old German trenches in the rear. I don't know how much I can say without running a risk of the Censor excising something or destroying this letter. But I will say that I don't think our lower-grade Staff work is good—I mean brigade and possibly divisional Staffs. I daresay, on

the other hand, our Army Corps and Army and General Headquarters Staffs are very good.

There is an enormous contrast between the hardships endured by officers and men out here. One doesn't grudge extra comforts to the company officers, but I think the subalterns get more than their share of it, considering that they have a good deal less work than the average sergeant, far less physical labour than our average private.

Well, I hope this bloody war is going to end soon—of course there is really no chance of that, but the sooner the better. I really think that the sense of relief on the part of millions of fighting men may fire *some* pen—European expression—though one doesn't want to hope for too much. But I do think it will be a bit of a job for the rulers of Europe to get us soldiers all at each others' throats again. I am all for a definite *defeat* of Germany (we are far enough from that), but I think I am probably a little less *Germania est delenda* than a lot of people at home—not from a desire to see the misery of fighting ended, but from the point of view of the future. There seems to be an awful lot of talk amongst English people of carving Germany up, scrapping her Navy completely, etc. I can't see any hope that way. But anyway it is too early to talk about that—except in private.

There is a fine view of an estuary and the sea here—a delightfully romantic miniature scenery in the sand-hills, which are pretty well covered with vegetation and trees and mixed up with the chalk ridges in a way that I don't think you see anywhere in England. . . .

I expect I shall be back in the firing-line before long. I don't want to stop at the Base long, as I feel I ought to be back with my men, as I am in sole charge of them, and if my other sergeant were knocked out there would only be rather young N.C.O.'s left.

To Mrs. Townshend.

LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS' MOBILE HOSPITAL, B.E.F.
13 *August*, 1915.

Thank you very much for the books which came last night, just the sort I wanted. Unfortunately, I shall

be leaving here to-morrow or the day after ; they are awfully good to me here and would have kept me a bit longer, I expect, if I had said nothing, but I felt I ought to be back with my men and asked for my discharge. I wish I could have stayed and read those books. However, I daresay I shall have a day or two in the convalescent camp and another day or two at the Base camp, both of which are close by here, waiting for the draft to go up to my battalion. . . .

I had a letter from A. last night that carried me back to many old days in my dead, mad past. Well, there is always a chance that there is some sort of a personal life beyond death, and if so, I might see B. again before very long.

It is dying, not death, that one fears. I feel more and more that there is nothing to fear in death. Some men really are brave by nature. I myself, like, I think, the majority of civilized men, am only brave by conviction and histrionic effort.

By the way, the yarns in some of the papers about the revival of religion at the Front amongst the English are all rot ; as you might imagine, the chaplains have to hunt out their flock by ones. There are a few religious fellows about, and it is quite clear that their religion is a help to them in the firing-line. One dark night I was talking in the trenches to a corporal of my battalion whom I only knew by sight. We were discussing our feelings in the middle of the dangers of the trenches, which were a hot place. Suddenly he said, " Well, you see, I am the Lord's, and that is a great thing." I thought I had not heard what he said, and asked him to repeat it. Then he explained that he was one of the chosen. I responded politely, and went away marvelling at human nature and religion, and the history of mankind in general.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 1 *September*, 1915.

I am now engaged in running a school for teaching men bomb-throwing for my brigade. It is a week's job, instead of going into the trenches. It is a good way back, which is not unpleasant for a change. Enclosed is a very small

fragment of shell which I got out of my head to-day. I carry several similar pieces about in various places—it is rather an amusing souvenir. No sooner had I arrived in this camp than I was bitten by the farm dog in the leg, not very badly though, and having iodine at hand, I was able to stop any risk of poisoning and went down and got dressed at the field ambulance in a limber wagon, which I will never do again as long as I live. The jolting over the cobbles was much worse than the dog bite. It was rather depressing to come back and find only 260 of the original fighting men of my battalion left, beside a hundred or so of Staff men who do not go into the firing-line. All my best friends amongst the officers are dead or badly wounded. You probably saw my name in the casualty lists last Saturday. Weather a bit chilly to-day, an anticipation of the autumn and winter campaign, but it doesn't do to think ahead here. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. I may possibly come on five days' leave any time during the next two or three months. My nerves are not what they were before I was wounded; every one seems to be the same. One gets steadily less cool out here. Every bombardment uses one up a bit more, I think—at any rate if you have been hit. What damnable rot this conscription agitation is! It is all nonsense for the Harmsworth Press to pretend that every one out here is keen about it. I am more against it than ever I was, and I very much doubt if a plebiscite of the Army here would get a majority for compulsory service. There aren't going to be many militarists among those of us who go through and survive this war; in fact, I get more and more hopeful of a really big international democratic movement after the war. I think it will swamp all such hatred sentiment as civilian journalists succeed in stirring up. I hope to goodness something is going to happen to our advantage in South-East Europe; that is the critical place now. The Dardanelles fighting must be pretty awful, a good deal worse than this as regards the ordinary trench warfare I should think, though I daresay things are about the same there as in the Ypres salient.

Well, no time for more now.

To J. C. Squire.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
15 September, 1915.

Glad to see you are dealing with soldiers' songs. The best one is unfortunately unprintable. We sang it as we marched across the Belgian frontier some months ago. It goes as follows :—

. . . . .

But the following is not a bad specimen. It originated in England, but may also be heard on the cobbled roads of French and Belgian Flanders :—

Kitchener's Army,
Shillin' a day!
Stuck in the guardroom,
Lose all your pay!
What shall we do, boys?
Let's run away!
Kitchener's Army,
Shillin' a day.

An interesting variant on the last two lines, which I believe originated in my own battalion, is :—

Join the Canadians,
Dollar a day!

This song clearly justifies the German description of Kitchener's Army as "mercenaries" attracted by an enormous remuneration.

I do not know whether my next specimen is really a genuine soldiers' song or an adaptation of a "curry" rhyme. But I have never come across it outside the New Army :—

We work all day, we work all night,
We work all day on Sunday,
And all we get for overtime
Is "Don't go sick on Monday."

"At the halt on the right form platoon" used to be a great favourite when we were performing this evolution

ad nauseam among the mole-hills of Laffan's Plain. But it has not been quite forgotten out here. The tune belongs by right to a song called "The Red, White, and Blue," which seems to suggest Unionist Working Men's Clubs :—

At the halt on the right form platoon,
At the halt on the right form platoon,
If the odd numbers don't mark time two paces,
How the hell can the rest form platoon ?

Repetition of the same line seems to be a characteristic of many of the soldier folk-songs of the New Army. I believe there is a civilian song or hymn with a well-known tune called "When the roll is called up yonder." The tune has been provided with the following words out here :—

When the beer is on the table,
When the beer is on the table,
When the beer is on the ta-a-ble,
When the beer is on the table I'll be there.

I taught my section to sing this in something like French :—

Quand la bière est sur la table
Je suis là !

And for the benefit of the worthies of Flemish beer-houses I translated it into what I hope is good Flemish :—

Als het bier is op de tabel
Ik ben daar.

Sometimes the simplicity of the words reaches a point beyond which refinement is impossible. For instance, one rainy night when we were marching out of reserve dugouts into a bare field which was the site of our rest camp, some one started to drone to a hymn tune the words :—

Forty days and forty nights,
Forty days and forty n-n-ights,
Forty days and forty n-n-n-nights,
Forty days and (*celerrima*) forty nights.

What the point of the forty days and forty nights was, God alone knows! But the song lasted till we were fed-up and drowned it with something else.

E. contrasts the soldier folk-song with the "machine-made" music-hall ditty. I don't agree with him.

. . . . .

Anyway, I will have no aspersions on the ballad of "Isabel." A lance-corporal out of my lot brought it back from an Aldershot music-hall one night shortly before we left England. It has cheered us up on many an occasion. Well do I remember how I brought a detachment out of the trenches one night after eight days in the front line of the salient. My feet had been wet for some days on end, except for a brief interval of a few hours after I had put on a dry pair of socks and a good pair of German boots which I found in an old German dugout. Ordinarily I swear I can down any man in my battalion at marching or carrying; but that night my feet seemed like pulp and each step on the cobbles made me wince. We were all tired and hungry. Then I started to sing "Isabel," and she took us all the way home into camp to hot tea and a dry "kip":—

Farewell, Isabel, Isabel!
I got to leave you, I got to go.
You know very well, Isabel,
I got to leave you, to fight the foe.
You know very well, Isabel,
As the battle I go through,
I shall do my best when I'm in it to win it
As I——won——you.

"As I won *yow*" is what the Brummies (Brummagem lads) say, and the form in which I always think of that line I think I shall call my next daughter Isabel after the war.

If you could get me a Flemish grammar I should be grateful. And I should like to have Seton Watson's new pamphlet and Brailsford's book on foreign policy.

I see that a Frenchman has just dug out the history of Mme. de Warens. I was always very much interested in her from the "Confessions" and hope to read the book

some time, but no time for that now. The writer of the review is rather merciless to poor Jean Jacques. Unlike most people, I detest his politics and political writings but feel a keen interest in, if not a sympathy with, him as a man. He was the eighteenth-century Wells, and Voltaire was the Tolstoi-Shaw. Voltaire was much the more important man on the whole.

At an Army bomb school in a pleasant neighbourhood now. Returning to my own brigade bomb school in a day or two.

A SOLDIER ON COMPULSION[1]

BY A SERGEANT OF THE FIRST NEW ARMY (F. H. K.)

One has not the time or the opportunity out here to follow in detail the course of public political controversies in England. But I have recently read some account of the efforts of certain officers who have been serving at the Front to add fuel to the flame of the conscriptionist agitation in England. These officers appear to have represented that there is a general, if not a universal, demand for compulsory service among the Army in France and Belgium. Since definite statements of such a nature have been made, it seems desirable that, if they do not represent the facts, a public denial should be given to them. Now as a matter of fact there is nothing approaching a general public opinion upon debatable topics among the soldiers in Flanders, for the simple reason that the organs for the creation of a general public opinion among a million men do not exist. Moreover, the great majority of the soldiers serving in Flanders were in civilian life at the outbreak of the war. Even several months of active service do not avail to extinguish one's civilian ideas and prejudices on matters of public interest. We have not ceased to be Conservatives or Radicals or Socialists because we are soldiers. And although the tremendous experience of a few months in the firing-line has a far-reaching effect on the personal outlook of the individual, the absence of

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 2 October, 1915.

opportunities for public discussion prevents the creation of any general trend of opinion which could cut across the civilian politics of the men at the Front.

I happen to have had exceptional opportunities for discovering what are in fact the various types of opinion on the subject of conscription held by the Army in France and Belgium. For over two months I was serving in my regiment on a "battalion job" which brought me into contact with officers and men of every company. (The great bulk of men live very much in their own companies, if not in their own platoons.) I then spent the best part of a month in a hospital, a convalescent camp, and a base camp, meeting and talking to literally hundreds of men of numerous regiments of the old Regular Army, the New Army, the Territorials, and the Canadians. The last month I have spent close up to the firing-line, but mainly in brigade and Army training schools for a certain specialized branch of infantry work. I have discussed the question of compulsory service with large numbers of men, not in a combative or propagandist spirit, but with a view to discovering what men are thinking and feeling. I deny confidently that there is any general demand for conscription. The great majority of men have not thought about the matter one way or the other. One minority is anxious to see the "millions of slackers" still in England made to "do their bit" in the trenches. Another minority, at least as large and probably larger, is equally emphatic on the other side, for just the same reasons, good and bad, that the average Radical or Labour man at home is opposed to compulsory service. Underlying these is a feeling which a soldier can perhaps appreciate better than a civilian that it is "up to" the voluntary Army which has begun the fighting for England in this war to see the job through, and that the introduction of a conscripted element would be a blow to our pride. I share this feeling strongly; but I admit that, in spite of its importance in the conscription controversy, it does not amount to a conclusive argument.

So much for my attempt to gauge the feelings of my comrades out here. May I be permitted to add to this

a brief statement of the arguments which, after four months of active service, have made me personally more definitely opposed to conscription than ever I was before?

The first argument is simply this: Now that I know what one's experiences in the firing-line at their worst actually are, I cannot as a responsible citizen of a democratic community be a party to compelling any man willy-nilly to share them. I do not care what may be the logical outcome of this point of view in relation to collectivist or individualist theories of the State; I simply object to forcing any man into the hell which I have myself experienced, and I cannot but regard any step taken by the State to compel men to go into the firing-line as a set-back in political evolution. I feel a moral objection to compulsory service which I never felt before I had come to France as a soldier.

In the second place, the view which I now hold of my position as a soldier in the New Army makes me strongly opposed to any measure of compulsory military service. I came up to fight as a volunteer because I believed in England's position in this war. If I had not believed in England's position I would not have come up. I should be perfectly willing, if I should be lucky enough to survive this war, to continue to keep myself fit as a soldier by undergoing a short annual period of training. But I would under no circumstances bind myself to come up and fight in any future war. I demand the right of exercising my individual choice before I take up a rifle for my country; and if compulsory service is introduced I shall feel that I have been deprived of the most precious form of political liberty which I have ever enjoyed—the opportunity of volunteering to serve as a soldier in a just war. Circumstances have made me directly conscious of the meaning of political liberty, and therefore conscious of what its loss would mean. If my sentiment appears to be obsolete cant to conscriptionists at home, I can only reply that it is backed by a *sæva indignatio* which makes me impervious to ridicule.

My third and last argument is the impersonal and social reflection of my second. A Government or a Parliament

which can legally call on a conscript Army is obviously less dependent upon public opinion in regard to declaring war than a Government which knows that it must rely upon volunteers for its conduct of the war. I have no illusions about the wisdom of democracies in general in matters of foreign policy; but we are all pretty certain out here that democracy will in fact make for peace in the next generation.

I admit that my three arguments are not conclusive if compulsory service is a proved necessity from the point of view of national organization. But so far as I can gather, conscription is being advocated for two main reasons —first from the point of view of national expediency, and secondly, from the point of view of "justice" or "fair play" as between one citizen and another and as between the individual citizen and the State. I maintain that my contentions are conclusive as against the second line of conscriptionist argument, and that they make it incumbent upon the conscriptionist to prove his case from the point of view of national necessity far more conclusively and definitely than he so far seems to have done. In fact, of course, only the Government has the necessary information for proving that case.

FLANDERS, *September 24th.*

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 11 *November*, 1915.

It is raining heavily again, but I am sitting snugly by a coal fire in a large clay stove, which I built with my own hands, listening to the patter on the tin hut which is our lecture-room, also largely the fruit of my personal handiwork. Have been finishing "These Twain" and also scanning the Flemish Grammar. I am decidedly better off as regards comfort as long as I stay here than I was a year ago in Blighty, and have nothing to grumble at but occasional fits of boredom. Of course I haven't an absolutely safe job; an appreciable proportion of bomb instructors get blown up, but I know the detailed explanation of so many accidents that have occurred that it will

probably be my own fault if I am the victim of an unintentional explosion. Half my regiment have gone up the line again to dig, and then go into the trenches. I saw the C.O. last night and told him that I was ready to return as and when required; in fact, I shall probably volunteer for the trenches again sooner or later if I stop here a great deal longer. I don't want to feel after the war that I was to any extent an *embusqué*. They have applied several times to my regiment to get me back from my brigade job, but the brigade insists on keeping me so far. I get as much satisfaction out of my work as a large proportion, probably the majority, of men do in peace-time. I am glad when the day's work is done and I can live my own life as I like, but at the same time I enjoy teaching of any kind, even in the limited sphere of instruction which I have. There is a satisfaction to be got out of making men's minds work, even around the ghoulish knowledge of how to blow up their fellow-creatures. We shall all be expert anarchists after the war. I see they are using bombs a lot in Serbia. They are handy for throwing on to roofs of houses in village fighting.

I see from the papers that the silly sentimental agitation about Nurse Cavell still goes on at home. A good many soldiers out here don't think much of it. I have discussed it with many and found them all of my opinion—while admiring the woman immensely, I think the Germans were quite within their rights in shooting her. The agitation reveals the worst side of the English character. I hope some Suffragists who prefer to stand for the principle of women's equal responsibility for their actions will protest against the rot that is being talked. I read Balfour's speech to-day. I am more and more in favour of him and Asquith and the respectable, decent men as against Northcliffe and Lloyd George and that gang. The dividing line in politics now seems to be largely one of temperament, and for all my erratic habits I have, I believe, a good deal of rock-bottom English instincts in me. I do not like Welshmen or hustlers, or phrasemongering do-the-trick demagogues, who damn the Cabinet just because they all backed their money on the wrong horse in the Dardanelles

—if they really did; I am not sure yet that they did. It is the old *nous sommes trahis* cry at bottom—which the demagogue always tries to rouse a democracy with. Will politics go back to the old lines after the war? I am decidedly not a Socialist any more, according to the logical definition of Socialism. I believe in State ownership of railways, urban land, and big trusts and monopolies, but I believe in private enterprise very emphatically in lots of industries, hedged in by Factory Acts and a minimum wage and so on—the Australian Labour programme, in fact. My Flemish peasants have made me look kindly on peasant proprietorship, which the average peasant Australian man quite accepts. The amenity of communism as you get it in the Army is very attractive, but its wastefulness is also very obvious. In fact, I believe I have now swallowed all formulas in a sense in which I never had before. It is a satisfactory feeling, but no doubt Socialists will call me a renegade, while Tories will find me just as revolutionary, and Liberals will have little use for one who has finally landed in their fold from a *faute de mieux* point of view. But I shall never cut a very big caper on the stage of history, so it doesn't much matter, and if Europe goes to war again I might die a good American.

Well, I enjoyed " These Twain " immensely, but I ended with something approaching indignation with Hilda. She emphatically has no case against Edwin. If she is in any sense typical of women's real desires, then I am almost a disciple of Mr. Belfort Bax. He—Edwin, not Mr. B. B.—keeps the machinery of society going. She ends with wholly ignoble snobbish aspirations—a dogcart driving into Burslem to gratify her vanity; it is outrageous, and I would never have allowed her about the works, using the works horse—outrageous! Of course, I see her difficulty: not enough outlet. Well, I am an honest Suffragist: still, I admit it is a difficult case, but after all boredom with leisure is not so infinitely much worse than boredom with work. Hilda's end at Ledderedge Hall is in one sense an awful come-down—a materialistic surrender, the manufacture of an outlet for her energies in a more elaborate material existence. *No bon*, as the

lingua franca here has it. What a fine Englishman I am, criticizing a novel from an ethical point of view! Well, it is the ethics and not the literature that interests me. After all, ethics is the art of life, and "life," some say, "is worthy of the muse." I talked long this evening with my two Yorkshire corporals, who come from the G.N.R. plant at Doncaster, where they work as skilled engineers. There is less of a gap between the upper middle class and them than between them and their labourers. Their lives interest me immensely. I know the family history and all about the relations of one of them as well as I know about my own family. If you know how to talk to men you can cut novels from the stuff of life yourself all day as you go along.

I shall get my leave some time, but there is a lot of rotten cadging for it out here, there being no defined rule as to the order in which men go in each unit, and I would rather the men who are still going up the line went first.

Well, good-night.

To E. S. P. Haynes.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
12 *November*, 1915.

Your letter written early in August reached me just a month afterwards by a very circuitous route. I forget why it was so much delayed.

I can now join with you in hating Lloyd George sincerely. He and Northcliffe are the devil. Perhaps you saw my article against conscription . . . a month or so ago?

Rain and mud pretty bad—but I personally am living a good deal more comfortably than I was a year ago. But of course my turn to go up to the trenches may come any day. I am ready when it does. I can't go through anything much worse than I have already been through, and what I have done before, I can do again—though I do think one gets steadily less brave out here as one goes on. If you are fairly strong-nerved by nature, the less material your imagination has to work on the better.

Am getting fairly proficient at Flemish and mixing with

the peasants. I have made friends with the people at the farm and went to a wedding party of one of the family. There was a baby there whose mother and brother and sister (children) had been wounded by a shell near the firing-line, and whom the bride (its aunt) was looking after while the mother was in hospital in France.

Send me any book on history or foreign policy if you happen to come across one of any interest. I get a good deal of time for reading, and enjoy it now, but cannot stand trash.

I heard that the Zepp. which missed my chambers got your offices. Is that right? I hope you didn't lose anything much. Am giving up my chambers—can't afford to keep them going for the sake of the remote chance of returning within a year or so, and I may not be able to afford them then. . . .

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 13 *November*, 1915.

Well, the next two months may prove the climax of the war. There is something Napoleonic about the German stroke for an Empire from Antwerp to Bagdad. I can't help admiring it in a way, when I close my mind for a moment to the horrors of the whole war. Things are in a very dramatic position. Are not people getting utterly sick of the Northcliffe Press in England? It is common to hear fellows here curse the *Daily Mail*. It and the *Times* simply infuriate me. I loathe conscription, but I am prepared to accept it in the last resort if Asquith and Grey and Kitchener say it is needed. But the dishonesty of the conscriptionist agitation seems to me almost unspeakable. These people must know that even now equipment lags miles behind enlistment. As I write, the continuous thunder of the guns four or six or more miles away rolls on, punctuated by the horrible "woof" of the big howitzers on both sides. This "woof" is occasionally followed by the shriek of a big shell fired at the town a mile and a half away; but of the half-dozen dropped into the town in the last quarter of an hour, not one has exploded. They have just fallen

with a thud into the earth and in all probability have done no damage at all—"duds" we call these shells that don't explode. Things look black in the Balkans, but one must just keep cheerful. The political intrigues at home seem to me to be despicable. I am all for the stodgy, respectable old gang, Asquith, Balfour, Grey, and Kitchener, against the adventurers. One is almost tempted to ask whether these journalists and politicians who stir up dissension are patriots in any real sense. What evidence of patriotism have they given? They have not voluntarily sacrificed a penny. They don't risk their lives and they don't lose their comforts. One does not say that they should necessarily do any of these things, but I can't help feeling that those who have not been called upon to do so might be a little less violent in their controversial methods. The articles coming out in the Northcliffe Press now seem to me to embody absolutely the worst side of England, but I won't readily admit that they do embody anything that is an essential part of the England that I belong to. When I think of the things, places, and people that I know and love in England, they seem utterly unrelated to this blabber. Only one can't help regretting that just at the moment when perhaps we are at the crisis of all the war (the future of the world seems to me to be hanging in the balance more obviously than ever now) the catchwords and rant and intrigues and egotism of men like Northcliffe and Bottomley, and I think we might add Lloyd George, for he has practically joined that gang, should have such a vogue. They stand out, in my mind, contrasted equally with decent, simple gentlemen, with men of intellect, with ordinary provincial middle-class people, and with the various types of workmen whom I know now as well as I know the average Cambridge man. These ranters and intriguers seem to me simply a scum floating above the natures of all these types, that do stand for something real in England.

I have nearly finished Kinglake's "Eothen." The first chapter is very interesting at the moment—his journey from Semlin by Belgrade and Sofia to Constantinople; it shows how seventy years ago people simply were not

aware of the existence of these latent nationalities in European Turkey. What an extraordinary thing their emergence is, as an historical phenomenon! Here almost more than anywhere else we can see right and wrong, unqualified and naked, ranged respectively on the English and German sides, for Germany does stand for obliterating that phase of history. I could dream of many worse things for the world's future than a single federal State stretching from Antwerp to Bagdad, uniting in peace the civilizations of the East and the West even more effectively perhaps than the British Empire can; but one knows that German dominion means an exacerbation of racial hatreds, that they simply cannot rise to what that commonplace English politician Campbell-Bannerman achieved for South Africa.

I am separated from my battalion now, and even when I am in it the death and departure of the great majority of the men with whom I did my first year's soldiering prevents it from being the same corporate body which it once was for me. It seems no more than a mere necessary trough for shovelling us poor human units into the war machine; and as the idea of it has receded into the background, as a source of vision for making this life worth living, and this work worth doing, the idea of England as a whole takes its place. Religion I have none; it seems no good in this hell. Vision a man needs, but not shadowy wraiths; his gods must be like the old pagan gods that spring from the realities of the human heart upon the earth. Honour, patriotism, and comradeship are one's best stays. Patriotism we English have, but I think a far less cultivated patriotism than men of some other races. God forbid that we should cultivate it like the Germans! But a man can gain strength from refining and winnowing and treasuring his views of what he means by his country, just as men have undoubtedly gained strength by communing with what they call their God.

The bombardment is heavy. I can picture the scenes in the trenches, too awful to contemplate. I am truly as sorry for the German poor devils as for English infantrymen. No man can hate his enemy while he is being bombarded in the trenches; even the apostles of hate who are there

leave that to Fleet Street for the time being, and if I have to practise my ghoulish art of bombing in an actual battle, I shall do my best to kill, that I know from experience, but it will be entirely without malice. That is the tragedy and comedy of it all.

Well, good luck to the Serbs, and good-night.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 18 *November*, 1915.

Well, I expect I shall be going up to the trenches again at last; it is still unsettled, but our Division is now relieving another, and I think our Brigade bomb school will probably be broken up. I am quite ready when they want me. I think I can stand cold and wet as well as most, and I ought to be able to stand shells as well as most, too. I could probably have got leave before now, but have not liked to push for getting it before others in my regiment who were going into the trenches. The scramble for leave vacancies is rather wretched. It is every man for himself in most things out here when mutual aid is not an urgent practical necessity, and leave from the trenches will be worth a great deal more than leave from this place, where I am really quite comfortable. I shall be very much interested in Bennett's new story. Will you also please send me the *Contemporary* every month?

What are we now fighting for? I prophesy that in a very short time the issues will begin to get narrowed down. We shall begin to see clearly that certain things, such as the utter humiliation of Germany, thank goodness, are out of the question. I can't see why we should want to shut Germany out of the East altogether, provided that we secure our through route to India. I think a fair criterion is that we must find outlets for German expansion which will avoid the danger as far as possible of Germany clashing with us. Thus Belgium must remain outside her sphere of influence, and German South-West Africa must be left in our hands. But I can't see why Turkey should not become a German Egypt, provided that the Balkan States are left genuinely free; and why particularly should Russia be re-established in Poland,

unless she is going to give Poland real freedom, excluding preferably freedom to bully Jews and Ruthenes? I suppose Germany will have to be kept out of the Pacific, but I don't see why she should be kept out of East and West Africa; but I have no hopes of or seriously a desire for an early peace. We must do something decisive first and also get some definite issue out of the Balkan fighting. I am all against anything like a premature peace. I should not be surprised if Northcliffe proves to be the traitor in that direction in the end. I don't think there is much to be said for *le bon Dieu* after all this. I should think humanism will gain considerably over theism after the war. I don't think we English will give way to sentimental revivals, as the French are alleged to do. It is not uncommon for officers to keep up their courage on whisky in the trenches out here. I should regard a draught of supernatural religion as an aid to courage in much the same way as I regard the whisky-bottle in the trenches. I haven't much natural courage—I did not enjoy the bombing from German aeroplanes which we got in this neighbourhood this morning—but I hope I shall be able to push through, keeping up appearances tolerably, without recourse to either physical or mental drugs. One must just try to set one's teeth and think of the credit of one's better self and one's country.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 1 *December*, 1915.

Thanks very much for *Punch* and the *Cambridge Magazine*; the latter appears to let as much pacifism of a rather bad kind come to the surface as it dare. I don't think it is a journal to be encouraged on the whole. Surreptitious pacifism seems to be its main note. I would not suppress that kind of thing by censorship at all; but when you still feel, as I do, that you would willingly volunteer over again for the Front, even knowing all you do, for the sake of helping to win this war, you cannot exactly love people who are trying to weaken England's resolution. I am sorry that Jane Addam is on the wrong track. I have always admired her. It is all rot to say we don't know what

we are fighting for. We do. Germany set the pace in militarism, though Jingoes in other countries must bear part of the blame; and we are fighting to show that not the most perfect military machine and most perfectly militarized nation is invincible. Of course, no one but drivelling bishops and stupid professional soldiers imagines that it is a case of black versus white, an absolutely holy war. We are out for our own hand, too—have to be; but it is all rot for pacifists to say that we don't know what we are out for. We must definitely prevent German militarism from in any sense being triumphant. To achieve that is to defeat it, and that will take a lot of doing yet. I am against conscription, and all for allowing freedom of speech to these Union of Democratic Control and Socialist pacifists. I confess that I am bitter against them, when I think of good men that I have fought with dying, and these people stopping to whine at home, and I don't want to have anything to do with ——. His attitude simply makes me sick. He complains that I am intolerant towards his opinions; but I do tolerate them and I don't want the State to suppress them; only it is too much to ask me, as he does in effect, to feel amiably towards a man who definitely disclaims his country and coolly sits and enjoys his income and security under the protection of its civil and military armed forces. And to think that he should live in safety while Rupert Brooke and scores of good men that I know go down before the dice of war! Besides, my own turn may come next, and I am damned if I am anxious to die.

Look here—I want something badly. I have just, after some weeks' waiting, got one short novel, "De Werkman," of Stijn Struvels, the Flemish novelist. I want half a dozen of any others of his works. They can be got at Amsterdam; several of them are published pretty cheaply. Can you write to the Dutch lady, whom I am dying to meet from your account of her, and get these sent over? Also anything else in the way of Flemish and Dutch literature she would think likely to interest an intelligent Englishman who has just reached the stage of having swallowed all formulas, and is

passing from *Sturm und Drang* into relatively discreet middle age.

Well, I think poor old Fritz is really beginning to feel the pinch now more than we are. I shall go back to the discomforts of the trenches with a good heart. I believe skilful financial direction is more needed than military effort in England now.

Please get me the books very soon. I can read one novel of Struvels' in a day. I may as well make a fairly good job of Flemish now that I have got so far.

To R. C. K. Ensor.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
23 *December*, 1915.

. . . Since last Friday I have been back in my battalion after three days in the field ambulance camp as a result of a slight attack of " flu." The specialized bomb-throwers (apart from ordinary riflemen trained as bomb-throwers) are now so numerous in my battalion that we have made them into a " grenadier company " 140 strong, and I have the rank of company sergeant-major, as their senior N.C.O. I was, in fact, anyhow very nearly, though not quite, the senior sergeant in the battalion—so many of the old hands had gone under. I feel I am doing all that I should be doing as an officer—unless I happened to be in the exceptional position of adjutant—in an ordinary infantry battalion, and don't feel inclined to break the many ties by which I am bound for better or worse to my battalion. People at home who talk glibly about one's " taking a commission " don't seem to realize anything about the hundred ties and associations which bind a man to his unit in any soldiering worthy of the name. It is a strange thing, but I feel that much of such pluck and fighting spirit as I possess doesn't come from my own self only—it is born of the ties which I have with scores of individuals with whom my soldiering is associated. When you come back to a battalion after an absence you feel this very strongly. It is only as you pick up the ties again that you feel yourself getting the better of the shivers which the horrible " wuff " and thump of the guns send down you.

By Christ! there was hell let loose last Sunday morning over that gas business, and I lit my candle expecting the order to stand-to just as we got it before we went up to Hooge on 30th July: in fact, it seemed like the Hooge morning over again. However, we did not have to stand-to till breakfast-time, and we did not move off, but stood down again at tea-time. For which relief, much thanks!

My battalion had been at rest since I rejoined them, and unless Fritz lets hell loose by way of celebrating Christmas Day and something very big happens, we shall probably not go up to the trenches again in this cursed area where we have shed our blood for eight damned months.

Well, do you honestly think there is a chance that I shall be able to celebrate *next* Christmas in peace and safety? It is pathetic to find how many of the Tommies are always believing that peace is coming before some date a month or two hence. One can see vividly how religions are born and grow—the human craving for a comforting doctrine is very strong.

We are in a camp of tents with a very few m·d huts. By the way, the *Chronicle* published some time ago some rot from some blithering correspondent who, I suppose, drives about comfortably in G.H.Q. motor-cars and thinks it a wonderful thing to come under shell fire, to the effect that all the troops are comfortably housed for the winter in nice warm huts. That sort of thing makes men swear out here. I don't grumble at a tent with a coke fire (when coke is available) even in the coldest weather; but it is a bloody shame to deceive the public at home and say we are in comfortable huts when we aren't. Till the autumn we hadn't even got tents, but generally just our waterproof sheets as roofs for bivvy shelters. It is rather like these blessed deputations who are taken into the trenches in some convalescent home where they fire about one shell and two rifle shots a day, and who spread the impression that time hangs on our hands in the trenches. In our brigade a man is damned lucky if he gets a dozen hours' sleep in three days in the trenches

—it's working and carrying parties whenever it isn't sentry and listening post, and trench mortars and whizz-bangs on and off all day and night in the intervals of bombardments by crumps. I don't pretend to have been through anything like as much as men who have been out here eight months and never missed the trenches, but I have been through enough to know what they have been through. And then people think it is mud and wet we mind; that is nothing, absolutely nothing, compared with the nerve-racking hell of bombardment. Of course, people at home can imagine that more easily than the bombardments, so that is what they talk about. I can't think that human nature ever had to stand in any kind of warfare in history what the modern infantryman has to stand. The strange thing in a way is that there doesn't seem to be any limit to what you can make human nature stand. But I do think that after the war there will be a wave of practical pacifism from the ex-infantrymen of Western Europe that will sweep many barriers to progress away. I will go on fighting as long as is necessary to get a decision in this war and show that prepared militarism cannot dominate the world—whatever hell may be in store for me. But I will *not* hate Germans to the order of any bloody politician, and the first thing I shall do after I am free will be to go to Germany and create all the ties I can with German life. It is the soldiers who will be the good Pacifists—just as every decent Pacifist should be a soldier now, whether he is a German or an Englishman. I dislike Liebknecht almost as much as I do the Union of Democratic Control.

What a miserable business the Cavell agitation was! I believe a large proportion of the men out here who think at all share my sentiments about it. I have no sympathy with people who *want* to execrate the whole German nation as much as possible. It doesn't help to win the war. Women seem to be particularly bad in this way. I met a lady—a ward-maid in the hospital where I was after Hooge—whose catlike ferocity of sentiments about Germans and Germany simply made me sick. A dose of shelling would cure a lot of that in any one. When you are lying at rest and hear a bombardment going on, you

can't help thinking of the poor devils of infantry in the trenches on *both* sides with sympathy. You are none the worse soldier or fighter for that.

To the Rev. William Danks, Canon of Canterbury.

31 *December*, 1915.

Thank you very much for your letter and the *Round Table*. I sent you in return the last issue of our Regimental Magazine, which I more or less edit. I am going up to the trenches again to-morrow for the first time since July. I am moving in an hour from a dugout in the nearest reserve to immediate reserve, and then go to the fire-trench to-morrow night, I expect.

Well, I hope you aren't one of these ecclesiastical German-haters—I am sure you aren't. Few Englishmen out here hate their enemies—I feel as sorry for the Germans as for our own men in the bombardments, and am none the worse soldier for that. The Scotch and Irish are, I think, more ferocious. The " Holy War " idea is Christian cant of the worst kind. It is all rot to suppose that we are white and the Germans black. Don't think I am a half-hearted fighter. I am not. But I loathe this orgy of hatred. The idea of a sort of permanent trade war after the end of the military war is huckstering beastliness.

After all, every German soldier who has been to the Front has done penance a hundred times over for his individual share of the sins of his country, bar the insignificant minority who really have had a hand in atrocities. When we do get peace, for God's sake let it be a real peace.

The article in the *Round Table* was right—humanity first. Christianity, of course, never really has emerged from the tribal god stage, and never will. The spectacle of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the leading German ecclesiastic each calling on their blessed " Gods " is amusing to anti-clericals like myself. Not but what I admit there are individual men out here whose religion does help them to act more nobly. You come across them here and there, and a sceptic who denies the fact is no true sceptic.

Well, let's hope to goodness that there will be " peace

on earth and goodwill towards men" next New Year's Eve. If men will really act up to that, even I will not boggle at their theology, provided we can keep you black-coated gentlemen out of politics.

Well, I am off to march up to the reserve dugouts in the dark alone, except with my orderly. I shall think of you on the way. I wish you all good luck for the New Year, and I hope we may meet again before 1916 is over [1]; if not, at any rate as soon as may be. Thank you ever so much for writing. Send me a line about anything when you can find time.

[1] Canon Danks died in March, 1916, and F. H. K. in August.

CHAPTER X

JANUARY 1 TO MAY 4, 1916

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 6 *January*, 1916.

WE came out safely from the trenches last night. It was simply awful beyond words. I would rather not try to describe it. Not so bad from the point of view of danger —only two killed and four wounded in six days—but mud and water up to your waist, unholy smells, churned-up graves, cold, and utter discomfort. This is in the front line. Not so bad in supports, and in fact very good in reserve. I did forty-eight hours in the front line at an isolated post where you could not sit, stand, or lie at full length, and dared not show yourself by day. No fires or light at any time. You could only get along the trench at night by walking between ours and the German lines, and the mud was so bad that it took an hour and a half to carry rations from trench headquarters to our flank. It was where the gas attack was pretty bad last month.

I read Bryce's article in the *Hibbert* in a peaceful moment in the front line. It was great, and I felt much moved by it. Then heavy shells started dropping just behind our line, between us and supports, shaking our frail shelter and in fact the whole trench. But enough of it. I will admit I have felt utterly sick of everything to-day ; it makes all life seem " red." I was completely worn out last night ; and if I went on feeling like I did most of to-day I would welcome a sudden end to it all. One gets so utterly fed-up with the mud, monotony, and murderousness of war. But you are wrong when you, like most people at home, think that the mere dirt, wet, and discomfort of the trenches are the thing to be feared. No one minds that relatively

to the shells and trench mortars ; it is waiting for death or dismemberment in bombardments that breaks men up. There is nothing in getting wet and cold as compared with this, but of course one can stick it all as long as is necessary, and I have quite cheered myself up to-night.

I have been reading Gogol. It is good stuff, but does not exactly help one to feel more convinced that all this is worth enduring. Well, it must all end somehow, some day.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 16 *January*, 1916.

Thank you very much for the two letters. I did six days in the firing-line and supports there from Saturday night to Friday night. There was heavy shelling in the daytime on Sunday and Monday, nearly all day on Tuesday, and sometimes on Wednesday. My duties make it practically impossible for me to get any sleep at night. I am prowling about between the English and German lines, visiting my advanced bombing posts, seeing to construction of bomb stores, dugouts, etc., making sure that my men get their rations and rum, and conferring with officers nearly all night. Then if they shell in the daytime it is practically impossible to sleep. They don't shell near the front lines at night just now. If one side did, the other side would too, and neither side would be able to get their rations up and life would be practically impossible. Mud and water not so bad in these trenches as in the last, but the work of my men in the advanced bomb posts is very dangerous and nerve-racking. They are quite isolated by day and simply have to lie in the mud ; if they were to get hit with a " crump " or trench mortar, they would simply be done. I got a telephone fixed up to one of the posts—the most dangerous one. Some of us have got a scheme for a bit of a show next time in—a rifle and bombing attack on some German listening posts ; it may not come to anything, but I have a lot of fellows who would volunteer to come and have a bit of a smack at them with me. The company on our right wounded and captured a German—a fine big fellow ; it appears to be true that the bullets in his cartridges were reversed, i.e. would inflict horrible wounds—in effect were

" Dum-dums." He was shot with his own rifle after a scuffle and got a very bad wound—was not expected to live, but I believe is in fact going on well. I am very sorry about the reversed bullets; I prefer to believe the best rather than the worst about the enemy. I do not care for the poem you sent me, because in the bitterness of things out here I have no use for " God " or for the sentiment that we in our holy righteousness are fighting a nation of brutes. I respect the Germans as soldiers, I sympathize with the poor devil of the German infantryman who goes through the same hell as I do in a bombardment, and I see the German point of view about the *Lusitania*, the Cavell business, and other matters too clearly to feel any sympathy for the yap, yap, yap of the Press about these things. I am out to do my bit towards inflicting as much as possible of a military defeat on the Germans. I am not interested in exaggerating their infamy. If it were a question of being deceived into believing them either better or worse than they are, I would choose the former alternative. Why? Because no conceivable good can be done to mankind at large by exaggerating the infamy of any nation. And speaking as a man face to face with the chances of death, I can honestly say that humanity and England's contribution to the Temple of Humanity are the only ideal conceptions for which I have any use.

At nights, where we are now and as things are, it is only bullets from fixed rifles and machine-guns along roads and between lines that we have to fear. The whizz of the bullets has little terror for me—one often gets them pretty close when knocking round. I think the psychology of fear is largely based on one's own experience—shells take the guts out of me altogether. The impression of the wound and shock I got in July is too vividly impressed upon the conscious and sub-conscious parts of my mind. Other men tell me that the whizz of bullets near by upsets them, but I think on the whole that shells are the things that most men fear. I am really much more cheerful and happy this time out than after the previous lot of trenches. My moral is better. I could go up to an attack pretty coolly, which I could not have done last time out. We expect to be in and out of the trenches in this sector till about the

end of February, when we may be held to have earned three weeks' or so " rest " out of the trenches. We were lucky to get off with only five wounded and none killed last time in. Thursday was a bright, nice day and there was a relief from the shelling of the four previous days. It cheered every one up. I said " Go hang " to sleep and played whist all the morning in my dugout. The first time I have played cards for many years—I enjoyed the distraction immensely. Last time out I was so fed-up with three days of life in mud up to my thighs, and the prospect of several more days of it, that for the first time in my Army career I " damned the consequences " of breaking rules and outstayed my pass into the town, over a cheerful supper party up till ten o'clock. You are supposed to be clear of the town after 8.30. I and the N.C.O.'s with me had the bad luck to be caught by the Town Major, so yesterday, to the great amusement of the regiment, I was up before the Colonel with my hat off and got a " rep." I don't care a damn, the pleasure made it worth while. I got a pass in again last night and went to the Pictures, and had a good feed and a bottle of wine with my friends, but got back just—only just—in time. You must do something to make life livable here —there is nowhere to go in this camp and the sole source of cheerfulness is a coke fire in one's tent—if one can make the stuff burn. Why don't these Y.M.C.A. huts come up here, where we could do with them, instead of catering for troops in safety at the Base and those A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. people in safe jobs ?

I have taken a stray black cat into my tent ; she is lying by the coke fire and miaouing in her sleep. It is strange what a lot of men talk in their sleep out here. I suppose all our nerves are on edge really. I was tired when I got on to the bus three or four miles from the firing-line on Friday night, but I feel quite fresh again to-night, and have been to the barber's to-day with my company. It makes us out here smile to read the official communiqués, " only normal artillery activity." People in Blighty think, I suppose, that that means nothing doing for the infantry. If only they realized !

Very late—lights out long ago.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 5 *February*, 1916.

At last I have a chance of writing to you. The battalion is in the trenches, but I did not go with them on Tuesday night, as I was summoned to G.H.Q. without any explanation whatever. I was there for three days, returning this morning to our transport camp. I lived in luxury at an hotel, but had a good deal of work to do, the nature of which I must not divulge. I shall very likely have to go back there for a couple of days next week on the same job, which will then be finished as far as I am concerned. It was an extraordinary pleasant change to get as far away from the war as G.H.Q. is, and to live in a really civilized way in a pleasant little French town. Incidentally I saw Tawney there, and he asked after you. He is going on leave next week in all probability. I wish I were. I can go when I like, but I decline to take preference over the large number of privates in my company who have never missed trenches since the battalion came out here. I was too busy to read or think much while at G.H.Q. But it was good to be in France among French people. I feel that the sufferings and trials of France in this war are almost immeasurable, and I certainly find myself more and more moved by sympathy with the French people. The toll of their dead is simply appalling.

I am busy writing stuff for the *Red Feather*.

I don't see why we should feel annoyed with America. My American friends rather surprise me by their (as it seems to me) excessive pro-British sentiment. I don't blame any neutral for keeping out of this business as long as possible. Of course if you really believe in the black and white or holy-war theory, you can call the Americans cowards; but like, I think, most soldiers, I don't believe in that. Execration is a civilian trade. Good-bye.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 9 *February*, 1916.

I must lose no time in telling you a great story about myself. My batman went to an estaminet to-night and

met a lot of R.F.A. men in our Division. One of them told him that my paybook, which I had lost a few days ago, had been found in the road near a place called Pushbike Farm. Then they got talking about me and said to my batman, "What do you call him in your mob?" "Oh, I've 'eard 'im called all sorts of names." "Well, do you know what we calls 'im?" "No." "Can you guess?" "No." "Well, we calls 'im Siberian Joe."

I think I would go through another Hooge and take the chance of pegging out in at least six bombardments for the sake of the glory of going down to history as "Siberian Joe."

THE BULLY BEEF MINE[1]

FROM A MILITARY CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE (F. H. K.)

Every one has heard of the waste of bully beef at the Front. But perhaps the following story will help to make clear the causes of this appalling waste and will also indicate the nature and progress of the efforts at reform. Last summer the regimental quartermaster-sergeant of a certain battalion in Flanders was finding, like many of his colleagues, that a large proportion of the men refused to consume the tin of bully and allowance of Army biscuits, which was then issued more frequently than at present in lieu of fresh meat and bread. As a matter of fact, a whole tin of bully (three-quarters of a pound in weight) is more than even a very hungry man will generally require for a meal. Moreover, most of the men spend practically all the five francs a week which they generally receive on account of their pay upon food and drink. So long as they can buy eggs, bread, coffee, butter, etc., in the farmhouses which adjoin the rest camps or in the villages and little towns a mile or two away, many of them will not touch what they regard as the less palatable items in Army rations. The regimental quartermaster-sergeant therefore found bully and biscuits strewn about the camp, thrown on to the incinerator, or accumulating in his stores. He tried to induce

[1] From the *New Statesman*, 26 February, 1916.

the Army Service Corps to keep a certain proportion of the bully and biscuits to which the battalion was entitled in their own hands. The Army Service Corps refused to do so unless the numbers entered on the ration indent were reduced. That is to say, supposing that the strength of the battalion was 1,000, the quartermaster could, if he chose, apply for only 850 rations on a given day. He would then only receive 850 tins of bully instead of 1,000; but he would also have the battalion's rations of bacon, butter, potatoes (if any), tea, and sugar all reduced proportionately. Now, all the other items of Army food are highly popular and are rarely wasted. The men demand their full ration of bacon, tea, etc., and grumble furiously if they do not obtain it. But the authorities insisted on treating the individual man's daily ration allowance of so much meat, bread or biscuits, jam, butter, tea, and so on, as an indivisible whole, which had to be taken or left *in toto*.

The quartermaster-sergeant of the battalion in question is an exceptionally able and conscientious man. Having been beaten at one attempt to obviate waste, he resolved to try another. There is in all battalions at the Front a constant stream of men leaving and rejoining the unit for innumerable reasons. Rations have to be indented for two days ahead, and men are constantly arriving who find themselves not "in rations" for the day. In point of fact, they can generally be provided for; but it would be convenient in a stationary rest camp if a reserve store of non-perishable rations could be kept for emergencies. The quartermaster-sergeant therefore began to use some of his surplus bully for building up such an emergency store. But here again he found himself in trouble. The camp was visited by a superior supply officer. He discovered the surplus store and proceeded to "strafe" the quartermaster on the ground that in accordance with regulations he must indent for rations corresponding to the exact number of men on the strength of the battalion, and must issue every man with his full amount of rations.

The conscientious quartermaster-sergeant gave it up. The bully and biscuits continued to accumulate. There was only one way out—a decent and thorough burial. A fatigue

party was turned out and hundreds of tins of bully and biscuits disappeared in the clay of Flanders.

Months passed away. The battalion continued in the weary routine of trench life in the same district throughout the late summer, the autumn, and the winter. They were quartered in one rest camp after another, but often found themselves in a collection of huts or tents which they had occupied some weeks or months before. The transport of the battalion came to be stationed permanently near the spot which had become the bully beef cemetery. Meanwhile the scandal of the waste had begun to touch even the official conscience. Some "redhat" (Staff officer) decided that there was no irrefutable reason why the regulation soldier's ration should be treated as a sacred indivisible unity, to be thrown at the individual man irrespective of the manner in which he would in fact dispose of it. At last it was permitted to battalion quartermasters to refrain from taking the full issue of bully beef and biscuits to which they were entitled. And some one started experimenting in the culinary possibilities of bully. It was found that with the addition of a little flour and some onions highly palatable rissoles could be made out of the tinned meat. The necessary flour was supplied to battalions in lieu of a part of the bread or biscuits to which they were entitled on any one day. The onions came out of the ordinary issue of vegetables. The rissoles were eagerly devoured by the troops, and became a highly popular dish both in rest camps and in the trenches, where they were carried up in boxes either to be eaten cold or to be warmed up by the men themselves in their mess-tins. It had taken a year and a half of warfare to dissolve the theory of the indivisible soldier's ration and to discover how to make rissoles out of bully beef. Still, we must remember that though the mills of God grind slowly they grind exceeding sure. And, after all, as we say in the trenches when the shells are falling thickest, the first seven years of the war will certainly be the worst.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. There was actually now and again a shortage of bully in this battalion. The best of the company cooks, anxious to provide as

adequately as possible for the men in the trenches, used to scour the camps for bully to make into rissoles, ransacking the huts, the hedges and ditches, the vicinity of the incinerator, and the latest refuse pits. One day a certain cook actually could not find enough. He was an old hand and bethought himself of yet another source of supply. Making his way to the quartermaster's stores, he secured a pick and shovel and started excavating operations at a spot where he remembered that large quantities of bully had been buried in the previous summer. He was soon rewarded by finding his pick go through a thin sheet of metal into something soft. He had reached the upper limit of the bully beef deposit. He soon exhumed thirty or forty rusty tins of bully, put them into a sack, and made his way to the cookhouse. His rissoles gave general satisfaction.

Obviously this sort of thing wants organizing. The tendency nowadays is for the brigade or division to take over specialist jobs. It is to be hoped that G.H.Q. will consider the formation of brigade bully beef excavation detachments at an early date. The biscuit question has not yet been solved quite so satisfactorily. It is widely known that Army biscuits form an excellent substitute for coke or charcoal, and it is not uncommon nowadays to see a number of braziers in a camp glowing with the peculiar bluish flame which distinguishes the biscuit fire. But some critics regard this as an extravagant method of preventing waste. An artillery major, commanding a battery about halfway down the British line, having failed to dispose of all his men's surplus biscuits by free distribution to the local peasantry, started mashing them up for his horses. Perhaps we shall soon see transport sergeants detailing fatigue parties to exhume tins of biscuits in order to provide dainty suppers for their favourite mules. But the biscuits buried by the infantry battalion to which I have alluded now form the main foundation of the roadway leading into the camp. They will therefore probably remain undisturbed, at least until the archæologists begin to investigate the manners and customs of the twentieth-century English by means of excavations on the plains of Flanders.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. *27 February*, 1916.

Have been on trek over snow-covered plateaux and valleys of late. On Friday we had an awful journey in a snowstorm. The wagons all had to be man-handled, and we got no rations or hot food on Friday night, or on Saturday till the afternoon. We have rested in one place now for two days, and expect to be in our new trenches in a few days' time. The billets are very poor. On Friday night half my company were sleeping without blankets in an open barn with no doors. However, we have got blankets all right now and I am very comfortable personally, sleeping in an outhouse which is also used as a cook-house. I got the book by Bazin which you sent just before leaving the last place. It only just escaped being dumped, but I came to the conclusion that perhaps it was the last straw but one on the camel's back. Have finished Anatole France's "Jocaste" to-day. There is something very exquisite about his perception of things. It is immensely interesting to be in touch with the French.

I feel more and more that there is something accursed in the huge amount of money-making in connection with the war that is going on in England both as regards employers and as regards workpeople. The nation ought to have risen to the level of insisting on placing a lot more of the war industries on an entirely non-profit basis. Broadly speaking, the English either volunteer for this hell or else sit down and grow fat on big money at home. The contrast between the two fates is too great. I am looking forward very much to seeing what England is like when I come home on leave—when! The men in the place where I am writing are all talking about their time on leave. Here are some of the remarks: "Do yer know, the first bloke I spoke to when I got 'ome to Brum was a Belgian. I cud ha knocked 'im dahn. 'E knew all the places where we 'ad been." "I went out in civies one arternoon and felt bloody-well ashamed of myself." "Do yer know, the funniest thing was when my sister told me she was workin' nights. I could na ha believed my sister was workin' nights. It's a rum thing when you

ha to go down to the firm to get your sister off for a night. I don't like women workin' nights." "My brother's gettin' four or five pund a week and my sister's gettin' thirty bob." "The gaffers won't loose a lot of the blokes for the Army. We say, Why don't they join the Army? but the gaffers won't loose 'em." "Aye, but I think they ought ter let some of those as 'as been up the line all the time go 'ome to work munitions. Let some of 'em Durby blokes come art 'ere."

We are moving off to-morrow morning from here.

Good-bye. I suppose I shall see good old Blighty again some day.

To the Same.

B.E.F. *7 March*, 1916.

I am still in the support line, but have been laid up for two days with "flu." I felt rotten yesterday, too ill to read or smoke, or even read or write. When the medical corporal came round he found my temperature was 103°, but he gave me some aspirin and it brought my temperature down marvellously in the night. To-day I have stopped in bed again and have been very comfortable. There was a friendly rat who was sharing the straw of my bed with me, but my batman drove him out remorselessly this afternoon, and just caught his tail with a spade as he fled through a hole at the side of the door.

We had rather bad luck here the other day and lost three killed and two wounded by a shell; there have been a good many shells screaming overhead to-day, and just as I have been writing this page our battery a few hundred yards behind here have been sending over a dose. I shall be all right again very soon. I don't want to be evacuated just now, as I am waiting for my promotion to warrant officer rank. This practically doubles my pay without increasing my expenses and is also a status worth acquiring.

I have finished Anatole France's "Le Chat maigre," and am now reading Bazin's "De Toute son Ame." I have also raided a good deal of official Local Government and theological books from the ruins of the Mairie and the village curé's house, and find them amusing for skimming.

Incidentally M. le Curé had an odd number of the *Revue Catholique et Royaliste*. *Mon Dieu!* our Tories and clericals would not dare to whisper what their confrères blazon forth. They are both equally wicked, but the French are more explicit.

Our artillery have opened out again. You should hear the infantry curse when our artillery starts. Our Army swore terribly in Flanders in Uncle Toby's time, but it never swore worse than the infantry do now at their own artillery, and then the British public is fed with stories by the newspaper correspondents of the noble British infantryman thirsting to leap over the parapet, craving for a ceaseless rain of shells on the German lines, etc., etc. The article in the *Nation* of the 19th February on the "Victory of Time" was a very good answer to the anti-Germans. This "war on German trade for ever" cry is bad politics and bad economics from the most cynical as well as from any decent civilized point of view. As the writer points out, the abuse of Kaiser Bill and Germany to-day is nothing to the abuse of Napoleon and the Huns to be found in the Press of a hundred years ago, and yet we and the French were as thick as thieves in no time. Of course it is true that we did destroy the Napoleonic tyranny, but even if by some chance Napoleon had been left on the throne of a France deprived of her foreign conquests, much the same thing would in all probability have happened. I have been much interested in the Local Government Official Annuals which I found in the Mairie; they have *Annuaires Statistiques* for the Department going back to Napoleonic times, beginning with very well compiled and edited annuals. *Voilà!* one of the fruits of the work of the Revolution and Napoleon! I should like to write an article about these books, and those I found in the curé's house, if I could find time. Compare this well organized and systematized local government with the chaos of the English parish and county in 1800.

Terrific bombardment over on the left. I hope they are not going to start a Verdun here, but I would go through anything to lend the French a hand. I only wish we could fight under a French Staff.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 22 *March*, 1916.

I have come to the 14th Divisional Rest Camp. There is nothing much the matter with me, only that I am weak from three successive attacks of the "flu" in a fortnight. It is pretty rotten doing the trenches when you are not absolutely fit. I am sure shelling affects one's nerves a lot more under these circumstances. I know I have got a good deal more "nervy" lately. Perhaps this is partly due to the shock of having a man killed right by me the other day.

This spring weather seems a mockery in the midst of this fighting. The songs of the birds simply make me sad. The skylarks start every morning soon after stand-to in the trenches, but one knows the shelling will begin about nine or ten o'clock.

I have only just got your letters posted the week before last. I shall be interested to know why you were not surprised to hear of my being nearly killed the other day. If it was a case of telepathy, I have been always inclined to believe in that. I sympathize entirely with what you feel about thrift. The Government should go in for thumping big taxes. At the same time the way in which the ten or twenty millions paid to the men out here is wasted rather appals me. I should think 75 per cent. goes in alcohol and gambling. The extent to which the latter goes on here is extraordinary. Men who run "Crown and Anchor Boards" make hundreds and hundreds of francs, and you continually come across cases of men losing ten or twenty francs within a few hours of receiving it as pay. As soon as the war has been going two years the New Army men will be beginning to get the extra 6d. a day proficiency pay. This will simply be wasted like the rest. In my opinion it should be made deferred pay, and handed over to men in the form of a Savings Bank account at the end of the war.

I have just finished Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis Quatorze" and de Maupassant's "En Famille." Maupassant's stories are decidedly diverting; you might let me have some more.

By the way, don't send me Rupert Brooke's "Letters from America." I have read most of them already, and the Brooke mania seems so remote from the Rupert I knew so well. What Rupert would have said about some of his worshippers, fervent Christians and such-like people! How they can swallow poems like that on "Fish" passes my comprehension—but obviously it pays them to claim genius as belonging to themselves, especially when it cannot say them nay.

Also I do not want Shakespeare sent because of any "commemoration." It is quite right, no doubt, that he should be commemorated, but reading now for me has a touch of desperation about it. I feel it is as if my mind were twitching in efforts to clutch at the life of thought. Not but what I turn to reading with enormous relief. But it is too intensely personal now for me to feel for a literary celebration. However, I could do with "Hamlet" and "Lear" now—in small editions.

I can't disguise the fact that I am utterly sick of this fighting. Being nearly killed about once in every three weeks ceases to be an "adventure" after ten months; it becomes monotonous. The one thing I crave for more than anything else, especially at this time of year, is an opportunity of enjoying nature in peace, away from the danger of shells, the sound of guns, and all the appurtenance of war. Every pleasant landscape now seems to suggest the horrors of war by contrast. Have just got the news of the three Zepp. raids yesterday. This kind of slaughter really is pretty horrible. One wonders how far it is going. I hope they did not come near you this time. I hope I shall hear from you soon.

To E. S. P. Haynes.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
25 *March*, 1916.

. . . At present I am in the Divisional Camp—a sort of semi-hospital, not far from the firing-line, for the slight cases of sickness. I have had three attacks of "flu" in three weeks. I got going again twice after lying up for a day or two in the trenches, but collapsed after each effort.

They say I am thoroughly run down. I am certainly more fed-up with fighting than I have ever been.

I had as near a squeak as one can have ten days ago when going down from the trenches accompanied only by a private at nine o'clock on a delightful spring morning. They were shelling quite unpleasantly all the time we were going down. We reached the outskirts of the village which we were making for safely and I thought we were all right, when suddenly a high-velocity shell burst right by us. I could see nothing for the thick smoke. Instinctively I jumped into a deep trench on the edge of which we were walking. As I jumped I heard the private—one of my best men—call out, "Oh, major!" (short for sergeant-major) "the bastards have got me at last!" He had been through everything with our battalion without a scratch, and I was in the devil of a funk, knowing that the cunning Boche frequently sends two shells in the same place if he suspects any one of being there. But I scrambled out of the trench as quickly as I could (having no equipment on) and found the lad lying horribly wounded in the stomach. I cut his trousers down and stopped the blood in the worst place with a large shell dressing which I had carried for months. He was so bad that I could not bear to lift him down into the trench alone, as it was so deep and I should have hurt him badly. So I took the chance of another shell doing us both in, and bellowed for stretcher-bearers—there was another regiment billeted in the village. After some minutes they arrived, and we got the lad to their dressing station after numerous halts due to damned German aeroplanes overhead. He was fetched away by the motor-ambulance, but died the same day.

That sort of thing, repeated a good many times, in addition to the nervous strain of shelling and bombardments, makes one utterly war-weary. On this particular occasion I was damned lucky. I was not touched, but found a couple of holes in my clothes, made, I think, by bits from the shell which killed the lad who was with me.

Of course, I don't want peace to be made as things are. The job must be finished off. And the thought of the French at Verdun inspires one to endure as nothing else

does at the moment. But how one dreams of the end! I used to be primarily a reformer—full of zeal for remedying this or that specific social injustice. I still am it—*au fond.* But when I dream of *après la guerre* I do not think at all of the great social problems which will immediately arise. I just think of the world—this good old cheery ball of earth—as a place of exquisite beauty, adventure, joy, love, and experience. I am perfectly content with it as it [is]. I even almost love its defects, as one almost loves the defects of a friend or lover who satisfies one. You will not find the man from the trenches is going to hate the German to the order of the politician, and refuse to buy German goods which are obviously preferable to the British product. By God! I can see the scene—before the peace, even during the armistice. The infantrymen will swarm over the parapets of the trenches on both sides and will exchange every damned thing which they can spare off their persons—down to their buttons and hats and bits of their equipment—for " souvenirs."

If only one has the luck to be alive to enjoy that day! The happiest fate of all would be to be alive and to be in the trenches.

I am not far from the original haunts where my battalion spent its first nine months out here. It is pleasant to have a change, but it is not in all ways for the better. The spring is delightful in this rolling chalk country. Every morning when I was in the front-line trenches I used to hear the larks singing soon after we stood-to about dawn. But those wretched larks made me more sad than almost anything else out here. . . . Their songs are so closely associated in my mind with peaceful summer days in gardens or pleasant landscapes in Blighty. Here one knows that the larks sing at seven and the guns begin at nine or ten. Every damned morning the Boches whizz-banged and trench-mortared the trench that I was in. For some reason they never touched the greater part of the front of our battalion. It was only one end—where I happened to be—that they worried. We had some but not a great many casualties from the shelling. But it gets on one's nerves. The

humorous side of being shelled is well portrayed by that fellow Bairnsfather. Have you seen his collection of drawings " Fragments from France " ? They are not art, but they are extraordinary good expressions of the soldier's humour about his own rat-in-a-trap predicaments. He has a drawing called " Where did that one go [to] ? " when the shell has actually " blown in "—as we say—the speaker's own dugout. That is the remark you hear after every burst ; each man anxiously asks his neighbour, " Where did that one go ? " It is funny—if one's nerves have left one any sense of humour—and funnier still when you reflect that the " next one " may by *force majeure* prevent you from making any inquiry at all.

Excuse these dirty " scraps of paper "—but perhaps they are appropriate for the correspondence of one who rushed to volunteer on the inspiration caused by poor old Bethmann-Hollweg's unfortunate phrases of those hot August days of long ago. I write lying on the floor of a well-built hut which we English have taken over from the French Red Cross. The bright sunshine, blue sky, and clouds and budding trees which I can see through the window make me think of the Alps and Northern Italy. But, damn it, they are fighting even where I tramped for pleasure in the Dolomites ! Well, it will end some time and somehow. Only let it be a definite, well-established peace when it does come. The Prussian monarchy must be smashed, but the German people must be given a chance to live an honourable life in the world if they will dissociate themselves from the bloody system of militarism.

. . . By the way, public movements unconnected with the war probably languish for lack of funds now, so I enclose my humble sub. for the D.L.R.O. (five-franc notes can be changed at any P.O.), which kindly forward to the Treasurer, whose address I forget. . . .

Have been reading Anatole France, Voltaire, and Maupassant while I have been ill. Voltaire is one of the great figures of all the ages—his combination of luminous sanity and passion for human rights makes him stand out even among the great. I have always ranked him far above Rousseau.

To Mrs. Townshend.

Good Friday, 1916. *In the trenches.*

Thank you very much for your letter and the photographs of the children. Bernard is certainly getting like me in some respects. Mrs. Green was much struck by it.

I am a bit rheumaticky as a result of two days in the wet in the trenches, but am beginning to take it as part of the normal troubles of life. Had another dose of trench fever on Sunday, but determined to come up the line on Monday and have felt all right since. . . . They have started pretty big stuff into our village into which we go in support. (At present in front line.) But I think the cellars are fairly safe as things go. Our artillery takes the aggressive, and one can hardly blame them for hitting back. I hope you have got the *Red Feather*. It is not a bad number, I think. The French Foreign Office is making a collection of trench magazines and has written to me for a set of the *Red Feather*. You will probably recognize "Ons Heeres Boomtje."

I can vaguely remember learning to tell the time and appreciate Bernard's efforts. I suppose they don't learn from "Reading Without Tears" now. But I probably learnt the three "R's" in the style of your generation rather than that of your children, let alone your grandchildren. I begin to feel very old, and shall till I am born again after the war. That is what survival will mean to some of us.

Well, good-bye.

Thanks for the *Nation* and *Nineteenth Century*. Romain Rolland never reached me.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 28 *April*, 1916.

Thank you very much for your letter and papers, which came up with the rations last night. A. G. G.'s denunciation of George in the *Daily News* is excellent. I should think it would penetrate even that toughening hide, and it is good to find the truth let out in the Liberal Press. No! don't send me that volume of poems. I am thankful that

there has been no good war poetry, or very little. There is not much that is poetic about this war. It is bad enough to have to listen to those people who justify war because it gives them a quasi-sensual satisfaction to see humanity crucified after the manner of the founder of Christianity. It would be almost worse to find our intellectual reactionaries —ineligible for the trenches—deriving satisfaction from war as a stimulant of great literature. I am more interested in life than in poetry, and I should regard it as a disaster to humanity if really great war poems began to appear. It would imply that war did really express something essential and inevitable in the human soul. I do not regard that little volume of Gibson's poems as really war poetry. It is about war, but not war poetry. The same applies to Squire's poem in the *Statesman*, which seemed to me rather good. I have seen too much, and my heart is too much set on a new life, to leave me much emotion to spare for the ruined stones of Ypres. When I was there I acquired a sort of affection for the place from our Army's association with it. But débris are débris, and the Cloth Hall is rather reminiscent of the dead beauty of Venice, which simply gets on my nerves. I am much more interested in the *Annuaires Statistiques* of the Pas de Calais and the histories of the Comte of Artois, which I collected here and which some brute has now destroyed. They *were* a genuine and direct link with the past. There is a hopeless gap between the Cloth Hall and us.

My rheumatic demons performed a culminating war-dance—by way of a sort of *pièce de résistance*, I suppose—for about four hours yesterday evening. Then I slept from sheer exhaustion, dreaming a lot, which I rarely do, and waking up for a few minutes at the sound of a very heavy bombardment a few miles away. The Boches have been sending pretty heavy stuff just over my head this morning. Am sorely tempted to come on leave next Wednesday. Only three of my men who have never missed trenches remain to go.

Well, I must be off to have a look at my scavenging party. I hope to specialize on dead rats, which I think are rather pernicious.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 4 *May*, 1916.

All being well, which it possibly may not be, I shall come out of the trenches some time towards midnight on Saturday and leave our rest billets at 5 p.m. on Sunday, to start on my journey on leave. Of course one never knows if leave may not be suddenly stopped for a few days or indefinitely, so do not be disappointed if I do not come after all. I shall wire as soon as possible after my arrival in Blighty. By Gad! the thought of Blighty seems too good to be true.

I think —— stands a good chance of being nabbed for the Army after all. Although I disapprove of this in principle, it is difficult not to feel a malicious satisfaction at the prospect. I know a large proportion of these Pacifist agitators whose names are very prominent nowadays. The alliance of the two types, demagogic Socialists and hypersensitive æsthetic intellectuals, is rather amusing to one who is familiar with both lots. They have nothing in common really. I once stayed for a week in the same Swiss chalet with one of them (a lady), who disliked me intensely. If any one was ever *vaterlandslos* it is she. Resident in Italy, and the friend of all sorts of scholars in Germany and France, steeped in eighteenth-century "enlightenment," she is as cosmopolitan as a typical Roman citizen of the third century. I should rather like to have an hour with her for all that. I am not so crude as I was when I met her at the age of twenty-three, and she interests me as a kind of Zoological Gardens specimen of *Homo sapiens*.

I have been talking this afternoon with my company officer, with whom I get on excellently. He has spent some dozen years in the ranks on foreign service. The foreign-service English soldier is a very different man from the home-service man—far more to my liking.

Well, I have done a lot of foolish things in my time, but I think there are few men or women who can be so much at home in so many different environments as I can. And after all that is not a bad foundation for a life worth living. I find it difficult to believe that I shall ever be bored or

dissatisfied if I survive the war unmaimed. But that, of course, is an illusion analogous to that of the perfect marriage.

This place is steadily getting warmer for trench mortaring and shelling. I hate the sound of a bombardment more and more, as week by week the sights and sufferings that it implies become more and more familiar to me. But the larks sing all day over these trenches, undisturbed by shells, aeroplanes, and all the appurtenances of war. They seem to flourish here much more than in Flanders.

This Irish revolt is a tragedy for Ireland, for which the Ulstermen are as much responsible as any one, since they started the fashion of keeping private armies. I should hope that mankind will be weary of violence as a means of settling disputes within the limit of a single State after this war, and that revolutionary Syndicalism and feminism will be rather out of fashion. But, on the other hand, I have seen it argued that Anglo-Saxon ex-soldiers will be more prone to violence in civil and labour disputes. It is difficult to say.

Well, anyhow, I hope to see you next week. A week of liberty will be glorious. I look forward above all to a bit of peace at Colchester. *Auf wiedersehen!*

CHAPTER XI

MAY 13 TO AUGUST 18, 1916

To Mrs. Green.

VICTORIA STATION.
13 *May*, 1916, 6.15 *a.m.*

AN extraordinary night. Row after row of England's fighting men lying sleeping on the platform or sitting on their packs reading the papers. I have just had a lovely "kip" with my back against a corner, but the owner of a stall has come along and wakened me in order to open his shop front. I got into one of Smith's carts a little way from Liverpool Station along with a lot of the Hants Carabineers going to Waterloo. From there I got another Smith's cart to Victoria. You can't get on to Smith's carts or "kip" on the platform in civil life! Well, it has been *fine*, my leave in Blighty. The happiest week in my life—undiluted happiness! I was afraid at one time that leave would unnerve me—on the contrary, it has bucked me up considerably. All the trench mortars, whizz-bangs, and crumps that Fritz is keeping especially for me have no terror for me, and even if they send me to yon side of the Styx I shall probably upset the boat going over for a joke, except that it might hurt poor old Charon's feelings. I wonder if Charon will take paper money for his obol now the war is on; it seems a much better *douceur* than a French five-franc note! I wonder whether the guillotined Royalists tried to get over with an assignat. It would be just like a Frenchman to try.

To the Same.

CAMP NEAR PORT OF DISEMBARKATION.
14 *May*, 1916, 8 *a.m.*

Last night, after a rather rough crossing, we were formed up on the quay and stood there for well over half an hour,

patience, punctuated by blasphemy, being the predominant note in the tone of the gathering. It appears that no guides to the famous and much cursed "rest" camp of this port had appeared, so of course, when they did set off they took us for a jolly route-march of three or four miles over the mountains in the wrong direction, and ended up at another camp only partially full up. I call it a "march," but I should have been sorry for any one, from Sir Douglas Haig downwards, who tried to make us march. We "went" in our own sweet way, in twos and threes and fours and nineteens. The military police on the quay showed a great improvement in manners during the past few months. They said "please," and treated us, quite rightly, as a well-trained civilian policeman treats a civilian crowd. Last May I saw one draw a revolver, but an R.S.M. of our brigade promptly put him under arrest, as I should have been delighted to do myself. There is no doubt that the whole B.E.F. becomes more and more like armed civilians, which is quite right, because it is the nature of the English race to fight as armed civilians. As a matter of fact the French are much the same. The conception of a soldier as a wholly different sort of animal from a civilian is really now simply Prussian. Of course, special sentiments and points of honour are emphasized by military life, but they are not, or should not be, different from those of civilian life. Part of the game of knocking about these sort of places as a C.S.M. is that you suddenly find yourself in charge of anything up to two hundred men from every part of the British Empire, whom you have never set eyes on before. When I was in a convalescent camp after being wounded I had to look after a barrack-room of forty men, including every type of British and colonial soldier. They frightened me a little at first, but I managed them all right. This morning I have had a company including every sort of man from Anzacs to Irish. Last night we just scrambled into tents anyhow—frightfully cold and no blankets. We marched from the wrong camp to the right one this morning, and I have just made a first-rate breakfast. There are lots of Anzacs about here. I think they mix less readily with the English than the Canadians do, but

I like the men immensely, though I think they look down on us.

Off presently up the line and to all that that means.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 17 *May*, 1916.

Here I am again in the old dugout with a cheerful brazier giving out a red glow. I got all the papers you sent last night. I am cheerfully replete with bacon and eggs and tea and enjoying your Russian cigarettes. The weather is good again this week, and I lay in a field all yellow with buttercups and dandelions just opposite my dugout this morning and thought much of Colchester. The shells don't drop very near here, but the noise of them and an occasional " zip " of bullets is irritating. I suppose I am six or seven hundred yards from the Germans, not much farther back than where I live when the battalion is in the front line. I am thinking of going to bathe this afternoon in a stream three hundred yards or so back. Shells don't seem to drop there and the willows and elms along the bank look very tempting. I hope that brute who shot Skeffington is heavily punished, otherwise I shall begin to think that England has Prussianized herself in fighting Prussia. I think nothing short of a death sentence on that man can suffice, if a fair trial confirms the facts which we all assume to be true. Life is getting too cheap altogether, especially in the eyes of people who read of death every day but never witness it.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 19 *May*, 1916.

Here is a flower which a lad just tossed me as he passed my dugout in a long string of men on the way to carry or dig far into the night. He said, " That will remind you of Blighty, Major." A graceful act like that is among the very best things in the world. The flower has brought me nearer to home. That was its end in life as you and I see it, though I hate the Christian philosophy which would

go on to point a moral of general self-effacement of every living thing for every other living thing. We go into the line again to-morrow night. Rather sorry to leave my pleasant existence here. I have cut a seat in the earth outside my dugout and have got to enjoy the look of the fields and hills by the little river behind here. All the fields between and behind the lines of trenches are now ablaze with yellow wild flowers; there are not so many poppies here as in some of the fields of Flanders which war has driven out of cultivation. The corn is now coming up half wild amongst the weeds and flowers for the second time. The peasants will have almost a hopeless job to get these fields into good cultivation after the war. We here often wonder what will happen to the trenches. Every division or other unit thinks it does more "fatigues" than any one else, and prophesies gloomily that it will be kept out here after every one else to fill in the trenches, just as we used to have to fill in the practice trenches we made in Blighty.

I have found that the alluring grey and white cat which used to prowl round my dugout is the mother of four kittens. I went to see them in their nest in the dressing station dugout two nights ago. Yesterday she carried them about four hundred yards up the road to a big dugout where fifty or sixty of my men are. There are two other nests of kittens about here, one of them up in the trenches, and one is almost always meeting new dogs and puppies that roam about and get board and lodging off any old soldier in the trenches or the ruined village. They say that one came over from the German lines. The trenches are rather a fine place for these creatures when things are quiet. There was hardly any bombarding round here last night. It is rather strange how we regard bombarding as a matter dependent on some great power above, and independent of us. You say to a man in the morning, "A decent quiet night last night," just as you might say, "A fine day this morning." Every one hates the sound of even a distant bombardment. It makes you apprehensive, especially if you have been through any sort of a hot time in the past.

Reverting to the animals about here, one of my men tells me that when they bombarded a wood behind the village not long ago, several dogs ran out of it yelping and barking. There is something comic in the idea of the animal creation unwittingly letting itself in for the consequences of human folly.

Thanks for *Public Opinion* ; it is a useful paper out here ; but I wish the gentleman would not always cover his front page with a speech or article most like an " uplift " sermon that he can find. I do not like " uplift " and it has not much use for me. But perhaps he caters largely for the parson who wants to be well informed, can only afford one daily paper, and is too lazy to go to a Public Library.

One of my men who is a plumber is making a drain to take off the waste water from a pump from which a good deal of the water for the trenches is fetched. As the result, I think, of the earth being stirred up, the fumes of a lachrymatory gas shell which had pitched there were let loose, and when I went to see him at the end of the morning yesterday his eyes were all red and watering. I had not been there five minutes myself before I began to blink and wipe my eyes. I suppose the main idea of these shells in a big show is to cause bad shooting and perhaps also " wind up."

With regard to what you say about Women Suffrage, I am a realist or try to be before all things in politics, and am always testing my general ideas in relation to facts of social and individual life. I am not only a Suffragist, I would throw every political position from Cabinet rank downwards open to women ; but I am confident that there will never be more than a minority of women in such positions, and I am convinced that it would be a disaster if there were more than a minority. Gurney Benham, who is a keen Suffragist, said to me that he thought men and women were similar creatures in public affairs. I don't. The *homo sum* argument is valid up to a point, but only up to a point. Most Suffragists would consider this appalling high treason ; that is because *le bon Dieu* has not thought fit to enlarge their dear little minds. A cynic might say that I am prepared to free women because I am convinced of the

superiority of men, but he would be a very horrid cynic and would only be speaking about ⅓ of the truth.

To Mrs. Townshend.

B.E.F. 1 *June*, 1916.

I was very glad to get your letter while in the trenches, and Shaw's article on the Germans delighted me, though I confess that the *New Age* as a whole is too modern for me. I have all along been and am now one of the people interested in politics who remember and cannot remain unconscious of what English political conditions were like before 1906. It often strikes me as very curious, or perhaps it isn't really, that among the Intelligentzia a large proportion of the most " advanced " people of the present day are those who were bitterly opposed to what was generally recognized as progressive before 1906. People who were anti-Suffragists then became prison-going feminist revolutionists about 1909, and anti-Socialists became Syndicalists. The first political book which influenced me profoundly was Maine's " Ancient Law," and my political thinking is descended from the Whiggery of Maine and goes back through Macaulay to the Puritanism of the seventeenth century and ultimately perhaps to classical republicanism. Therefore I cannot swing from one pole to another of social theory, though I should be far from claiming consistency as a virtue in all or perhaps in many circumstances.

You are quite right in saying that Colchester represents England better than London now. All my past civilian life seems a very long way away now, and I can review the past ten years impartially. I shall certainly never live in London again if I can possibly help it. All this North-cliffism is, I think, mainly due to the unhealthy condition of " the wen," as Cobbett called it. Urban Yorkshire is barbarous, perhaps half American, and East Anglia may have a drowsy atmosphere overhanging it, but they are pretty well defined living communities of men familiar as entities to every one's thought. They can hit back, vaguely and half blindly perhaps, but still as unities, against bamboozlement. London cannot and won't, and swallows these beastly lies much more easily.

You, of course, look forward to craft or industrial organization splitting across local governmental organization. But I don't see much to be proud of in the conduct either of the big employers or of the workmen and their organizations in this war.

Neither of them is ashamed to enrich themselves with the price of blood, and no one can conceive of the present-day urban worker ever being in general as fine a creature in his workshop as he is as a soldier.

Of course, it is hard for people at home to realize what we are going through. I found myself after a day or two automatically placing every one I met either in one or other of the two types, those who do and those who don't feel for the "trench population," as Churchill rightly called us in contradistinction to all the limpets who cling to safe jobs behind the lines. There are very few of them who could not be replaced by war-worn men. (That speech of Churchill's voiced the sentiments of an Army as few speeches in history have ever done.) I think women on the whole feel for us more than men, though some women are bestially cruel in their anti-German sentiments.

I am in no way a peace-at-any-price man and follow Grey in his admirable speech entirely.

Of course we don't have a bad time always. Just now we are having a glorious six days' rest (including some night trench digging as a fly in the ointment) after eighteen days "in." We are in a nicer village than the last one we had, though we can easily be shelled if Fritz likes—and perhaps he will like soon, as a big gun near by, worked by marines, was smashing him up this afternoon. However, it is a good Army and a good war to-day, as we say, and it is no good living for anything but the present out here, except when the present is too unpleasant to be tolerable; then think of the future or of anything but your own environment.

. . . There does seem to be a fair hope of peace before Christmas. No more winters in Northern Europe for me! I have had enough wet and cold for all my natural. England won't see much more of me after the war. I have repaid some of the bounty she has showered on me and am ripe for life in a new land. I think there is no doubt that a lot

of men will be making for the colonies. The war has brought out the Robinson Crusoe that is in every Englishman.

Well, I only hope they won't blow my head off next week to put an end to the realization of the scheme of my next chapter.

I am having Curtis's book sent me. I hope I shall live to see great developments in the Anglo-Saxon Commonwealth. I am glad that they are talking about Commonwealth and not Empire. . . .

It is not without significance that Dilke and Chamberlain, two of the great founders of what is unfortunately called Imperialism, were both also republicans by choice and only opportunist monarchists.

I cannot understand why some of my friends (Pacifists or semi-Pacifists mostly) are gloomy about the political future. I am full of hope. The English spirit is going to extend itself in the world, I feel convinced.

To Clifford D. Sharp.

4 *June*, 1916.

Enclosed is first instalment of stuff for the eighth number of the *Red Feather*—a drawing and two poems. We have got the next number more or less planned out, and I expect more stuff will be in soon. . . .

The 21st May was the anniversary of our landing in France. We could not do anything to celebrate it, as we were in front-line trenches. Am enjoying six days' rest.

Things have been fairly quiet since I returned in our sector, and no one has been killed, though several have been wounded and got shell-shock—the latter from a bloody enormous trench-mortar projectile which they have just brought up into our region; it makes a hole like a Jack Johnson hole and is damnably nerve-shattering. The Germans have revived the practice of dropping arrows from aeroplanes in these parts—rather heavy things with fowls' feathers for a tail. These have not been dropped while we have been at rest, but we have found a good many in the village. It is the best village we have had for some time —some decent people in it—though peasant women are

bloody about objecting to one's playing cricket on their fields, even if you offer to pay and take care to do no damage.

Churchill has obviously made some misstatements, but his criticisms have been very useful on the whole, I think. It is a bit of a blow to find him talking in a matter-of-fact way of the fighting Army of late 1917. If I really expected to be here till then, I think life would be absolutely unbearable.

The most violent trade-war people seem to me to imply that we are not going to defeat and destroy Prussian militarism. If we do a trade war as they preach, it is simply a mischievous idea. Of course we must be prepared with much State support of industry against not only Germany, but many other post-war dangers. But these people seem to be determined never to give Germany a chance of being a reformed character, and don't want to hope that she will ever be. I don't expect miracles or a revolution, but I am sure that the German is by nature more peace-loving than the Englishman, and that there will be a great revulsion of feeling in Germany, which may overcome even the hopes which the idea of the future naval war with England might contain for some Germans.

. . . . .

Queer thing to see nothing but crucifixes in the villages here, while in Flanders it was all Virgins. I wonder if it is because religion has a hold on men as well as women in Flanders, and for the most part only on women here. Obviously one needs a God of the opposite sex to oneself in the kind of religion these people have. Perhaps, on the other hand, the contrast represents the historical consequences of two different pagan cults of centuries ago.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F 4 *June*, 1916.

I have this morning read Toynbee and Bryce's pamphlet on the Armenian atrocities. Much as I prefer the Turk to the Armenian, I cannot help feeling that this is about

the most dreadful of all the horrible things in this war, and I felt compelled to send a humble obol to the Refugees Fund. Allowing for all the exaggerations, I suppose the total number of Armenian men, women, and children massacred must exceed the total number of British subjects killed in this war. One cannot get away from the fact that the Armenian in Turkey, just as the Jew in Russia, does constitute a very difficult problem, each of these races possessing the money-getting instinct and capacity to a far greater degree than the natives in whose land they live. But nothing can justify this sort of massacre. I am inclined to think that the solving of the nationality problem after the war really ought to be helped out by a certain amount of deliberate geographical sorting out and transportation of alien minorities, with whom majorities cannot live in peace, to other areas. The general uprooting which the war has brought about in various places would make this practicable, I think, in particular areas. I think Zionism ought to be given a chance, for instance, and the population of Macedonia could be sorted out to a certain extent. It is extraordinary how the Anglo-Saxons seem able to assimilate and, where they do not assimilate, to live at peace with aliens much better than any one else. The French can assimilate too, but they do not tolerate other languages and cultures as we do. Why cannot mankind at large learn the lesson of toleration? I am both cosmopolitan and nationalist—more nationalist, I admit, than I was before the war, because the distinctive qualities of the English have come to light more positively than before.

I have been knocking about near the front line planning out the men's work for to-night with an officer and sergeant. We came eventually on our journey to a road which runs through our lines into the Germans'. The road was, of course, overgrown with grass. There is something very mysterious about these roads which run from your own lines into enemy country. It would be so simple to walk a couple of hundred yards farther were it not for all the weapons of war, and it is extraordinary to live in such close proximity to the gentlemen opposite, and to know nothing, or

next to nothing, about their doings. The road unites us. I am sure many a mystically fanciful German has thought as wistfully as I have of the continuation of one of these many international roads as he sat behind his barricade.

We played cricket yesterday evening with great enjoyment. Lord Henry Bentinck has sent my men a set, which they greatly appreciate. An old peasant woman turned us off her field and would not even listen to offers of payment. I wonder if Germany's sergeant-majors offer to pay and make the men move under such circumstances. However, in the end I gave her two minutes' continuous of my very choicest, knowing that she would not "compree." We moved to a bare patch and then a Taube came over; however, we finished our game.

I don't altogether care for the British Workers' National League, whose manifesto you sent. I think it is rather a false adaptation of Australian labourism to English circumstances. It is ridiculous to suppose that German sweating is what we have to fear in industrial competition. The manifesto implies too much truckling to the Trade War business for my liking.

I have just finished Barrès's "Au Service de l'Allemagne." I enjoyed it, but if that is really the French case for having Alsace-Lorraine, then I cannot say I am much impressed by it. In effect it simply amounts to the claim that the mission of France is to civilize Germans and that to civilize Germans is to Gallicize them. This is simply polite Prussianism. I don't think I want you to send me any more of Barrès. He represents reactionary France, which is in many ways more alien to us English than reactionary Germany. As between Barrès and Kaiser Bill I have very little feeling of partisanship. If Barrès and Bazin really represented France I should feel that much of our English blood was being spilt in vain. Here are some oats and poppies from the old trench near where I am going to live. Oats seem to flourish wild better than barley. This is the second year that the corn in the fields in which our trenches lie must have come up wild.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 6 *June*, 1916.

I am in the trenches again. We came up last night without mishap.

Thank you for the *Nation*—that review of the Grenville Letters was delightful—and also for the magazine you sent. I like Bairnsfather immensely, but those quasi-society weekly papers honestly revolt my moral sense. There is a kind of half-hearted sensuality about them, extending even to the paper they are printed on. You get the same in the gossip pages of the halfpenny illustrated papers, and I think it is the most unclean thing in England. I do think that the Anglo-Saxon peoples make more of a mess of sex than any one else in the world. I don't think it is really in the blood, and I believe that probably the practical Anglo-Saxon capacity will in the end reform social sexual morality more effectively than any other force in the world, possibly in part because the need for reform is greater with us than it is with any other race.

. . . . .

I have just been interrupted again by the old black rat. My batman had got him in a corner outside and called me to help to dispatch him. Just as I got up from sitting on the dugout steps the old beggar tried his usual dodge of running down the steps to his hole downstairs. I got him with my heel, he squeaked, turned back, and ran under a board; Kearney poked him out while I snatched up a bayonet and smashed his head open as he ran out of cover again. He did not suffer long, and now he is under ground.

I have been talking to Kearney about his trade union. He works in the Bermondsey leather trade, and in a strong union shop. It is interesting to find that the man in their trade who corresponds to the "shop steward" in the engineering trade or the "father of the chapel" in the printing trade is called "the lord of the shop." The English manage to make nearly all their institutions marvellously picturesque in a solid sort of way. There is something great about the "lord of the shop" and "father of the chapel."

The point about sergeant-majors, to whose general position you were alluding the other day, is that there are relatively few of them, far fewer than there are captains, for instance, and a great deal fewer than there are subalterns. Also I should think they have, or can have, more influence over the men's lives for good or evil than any other rank. I don't think I should like to change into any other position off the Staff, except perhaps that of a regimental sergeant-major, and I should not care for that job outside my own battalion.

A bit of a strafe has just started—some sort of big stuff dropping in our second line. I suppose they must keep the war going.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 10 *June*, 1916.

I have been pretty busy this time "in." I have got a new idea for the construction of trenches, or at least two new schemes. I have a special gang of men working out one of the schemes this time, and I go round and direct operations a good deal. I have about five parties working in different parts of the trenches, beside the men manning saps and bombing posts; all these need my fatherly eye, and as we hold about a mile of front, and the trenches are a sort of Hampton Court maze, I get a good deal of walking about. I have now moved into my renovated French dugout in a maze of trenches overgrown with weeds and corn, which C. and I call the "jungle." My batman, the Holborn Restaurant waiter, has returned and lives with me again. Yesterday morning, when I was still in the bomb store, and just after I had had breakfast, a whizz-bang skimmed the top of the place and burst near. I had my boots and equipment off, my tunic was soaking wet and being dried by a brazier, as I had been out in the rain all night, but I leaped up and ran like a rabbit, in my bare feet, down the trench just as another one burst. I think my new quarters will be a bit safer.

The last parcel was excellent, especially Rose's cake. The steak and kidney pie gave me the best dinner I had had since I left Blighty, only I cut my finger on the tin in

opening it ; there is no reason why I should have cut it, as I have opened scores of bully tins without mishap.

The General is coming to see my new trench as soon as I get it done. I had a Colonel of the —— and the Brigade Major and Staff Captain round to-day. I have got a good lot of men doing it, and I have offered them one five-franc note, and the company officer has offered them another, if they get it done before we go out to the sunken road and ruined village to-morrow night. The corporal is in the building trade, and the men include Cornish miners and farm hands as well as townies. The " jungle " is an extraordinary place, hardly any one can find their way to it, and C. and I threaten any officers in other companies who give us trouble with abduction and shooting, or confinement in the " jungle." The old French dugouts here had largely got clogged up with fallen earth. I hope that the Germans will think that this one is still disused and will not drop stuff here.

I hope we don't have any more Generals as Secretary of State for War. We ought to have a civilian now on principle.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 17 *June*, 1916.

It is a delightful breezy, sunny day to-day, but the only result of the breeze is that we have to be alert against gas, and the only result of the sunshine is that the artillery can observe better. Things continue to be pretty quiet here. Well, I should think that Austria will soon have had enough, but I can't see any real likelihood of a separate peace with her.

Thanks for the *Nation*. Its attitude irritates me, rather. It seems too anxious to run with the belligerent hare and chase with the Pacifist hound. The idea of a separate peace with Turkey or Bulgaria, which Largnet is advocating, involves dastardly desertion of Russia or Serbia or both. I can't see why Russia cannot have Constantinople. No one can claim it on grounds of nationality. The religious sentiment in the matter does not interest me, though I have a growing liking for Mohammedanism and have no

desire to extend the sphere of the Cross at the expense of the Crescent, but it seems to me that the peace of the world is more likely to be assured if Russia holds Constantinople than if any one else does. For one thing, it would be good to put Constantinople once and for ever out of the reach of these Balkan nationalities, none of whom is obviously fit to run it, or to rule any people of alien race. The main hope for the Serbs is to de-Balkanize them by uniting them with the Croats, who, as the result of centuries of Austrian rule (give the devil his due), are much more civilized than their southern brethren, especially more civilized than those stage brigands, the Montenegrins, but we must do all we can to put the Southern Slav race on its legs. The attitude of the Italians in the matter, and their utter inability to sympathize with a nation which is trying to do what they did a century ago, is what disgusts me with them. They have behaved like Dagos, not like nationalists. Frenchmen and Italians of the reactionary type are both inclined to presume too much on their charming manners and ancient history. Their ancient history can go to blazes as far as I am concerned, and I don't care much more about their charming manners, if they cannot learn to do their duty in the comity of nations. Their chauvinism is more invidious than that of Prussia because it is less hideous. I think Austria would be much the most interesting place to visit after the war, or the South of France for pure pleasure, but anywhere will be all right out of this hideous life.

Interrupted by a rat. Also a German aeroplane over. Had a few shots at it by way of amusement.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 23 *June*, 1916.

This desolate area of craters and half destroyed trenches seems more and more extraordinary after one has lived here a day or two. The lower stratum of solid chalk has simply come down on top of the uppermost soil in miniature mountains and valleys, and the crater ridges stand out in fantastic shapes on the sky-line. When I come to the inner lip of one of the craters at night I see three or four

black forms stretched on the chalk on the other side. These are my bombers, watching over the edge of the outer lip. A lot of Germans here were blown up with their own mines. You can find old German rifles and bits of equipment mixed up with English overcoats ripped in half and great logs which have fallen all over the place. I am salvaging some of these logs, by the way, to make new dugouts with. It is both less wasteful and less laborious than having new logs carried up from the battalion dump. To-day there was a most remarkable thunderstorm, which added to the general atmosphere of death and destruction which seems to have found an almost perfect expression in this place. A light cloud seemed to be coming almost down to the trenches. For a moment I wondered if it was some form of poisonous gas. Fine rain began to fall; suddenly there was a gust of wind which culminated in a brief hurricane, while the rain seemed to develop into a solid torrent. There was a little thunder and sheet lightning, not very close. In less than half an hour it was all over.

I am very glad you have got Havelock Ellis's volumes. I think they show an extraordinary combination of human insight and scientific method. Desmond MacCarthy was very good on Stendhal in the current *Statesman*.

I am much interested in the Arab revolt. I feel more and more that Mohammedanism ought to be regarded with intelligent respect, and that we ought to supersede Turkey as the great Mohammedan Power. After all, most Mohammedanism comes much nearer to intelligent Unitarianism than most Christianity does, and I doubt whether Mohammed has done any more harm to women than various Christians have done—taken together. And the traditional Mohammedan attitude to women is probably not regarded by intelligent Mohammedans as an essential part of their ethics. It is interesting to remember that England has quite rightly in certain places restricted Christian missionary effort amongst Mohammedans. I wish that a body of our Intelligentzia—such people as Bernard Shaw and Arnold Bennett—would issue a manifesto of sympathy with Mohammedanism, or at any rate that in some way a public recognition of an equal status

of Mohammedanism with Christianity in the Empire should be accorded. Why should not George V become a sort of protector of Islam? He is already both a Presbyterian and an Anglican! Can you get a pocket edition of the Koran to send me and any small, light book about Mohammedanism? I once started to read that one in the Home University Library, but found it rather jejune and uninterestingly written. However, if there appears to be no other, send me that, and I will see if I can get it down better under shell fire than I could in times of peace. This extraordinary bastard negro movement in Christian Nigeria is very interesting. How little we understand the dull stirring of the minds of people in that stage of development!

To the Same.

B.E.F. 4 *July*, 1916.

I am in rather more comfortable and secure quarters now, and shall be for a few nights. I feel full of pity for the poor devils in the big fighting. I shall go into it with a good heart when my turn comes, but the stuff in the papers about men thirsting to attack is such utter nonsense, and one imagines that it must be realized to some extent that it is so even by civilians. Why do these foolish journalists want to write like that? It simply gives a false account of what undoubtedly our good moral is like, and throws a false glamour over the bestiality of war. Well, I shall sleep with my boots off to-night for the first time for a fortnight.

Last night I saw, I think, the most symbolical scene of warfare which I have ever come across. As I turned a corner of a trench with a young officer we suddenly faced a fair expanse of ground over which the contour lines enabled us to look. The horizon was near—only three hundred yards or so away—topped by an avenue of trees, bare and shell-stricken on the right, the end nearest the firing-line, and gradually becoming more leafy as we looked to the left. On the extreme right the scene ended in the hummocks, holes, and gradual slope upwards of one of the big mine craters. The dominating colour of the ground was

white. Trenches, shell holes, and mine upheavals had torn up the chalk from below the surface soil, but there was a solid mass of scarlet poppies in the middle of the picture, contrasting wonderfully with the white and grey ground and the yellowish background of an early twilight sky. I shall never forget the vision of beauty and desolation which I saw in a flash that moment.

I saw a report that Bethmann-Hollweg had endorsed a speech by Scheidemann in which the latter stated that B.-H. took the view that there could be no durable peace if Germany demanded any territorial aggrandizement. If this is correct it is not unimportant. B.-H. certainly seems to be seeking support from the pro-war Socialists and Liberals against the extremists. I think that in England there may be quite probably a controversy over peace comparable with that over the Treaty of Utrecht. Some of our fire-eaters will never be satisfied. But some basis for the beginnings of a League of Peace is as important as the territorial terms of this particular peace itself.

Rats are as bad here as in any place I have stopped in. They have innumerable holes all round my dugout, and if one is sitting quiet and alone it is not long before a grey or tawny nose peeps out from somewhere and a beady black eye fixes one. A glorious day to-day. One never suffers from extreme heat in underground dugouts, and deep trenches don't get much sun in them. I think this has a lot to do with such unhealthiness as there is in trench life. Of course aeroplanes are active, as it is good flying weather, and the anti-aircraft shells are bursting rapidly one after another over my head. The flying bits have just driven my batman under cover.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 9 *July*, 1916.

We had a bit of a concert after we got back from the line last night, where I had been working on the winch and heaving sand-bags all day. C. appeared dressed in a French suit of civilian clothes, and one of the men did a clog dance clad in a pair of boots. I never laughed so much in all my life. Two young officers dressed up as French

ladies and went round the place with C., to the amazement of all the sentries. I have got dry things now for the first time for four days. The weather is very bright and sunny now, and *what* a pleasure it is to be dry once more! When my grand-children ask me, "What did you do in the Great War?" I shall reply, "I turned a winch down a mine." I never felt I understood the soul of those Belgian dogs that work things by running inside wheels so completely before.

Well, your Home Defence soldiers do not get the all-round experience that we do. Honestly I enjoy the manual labour, and it is fun to work with these Australian miners. The weak point of the Colonial is the lack of fine subtlety of mind that you find very often even in the humblest people in the old countries. I believe it is a thing which only comes as man becomes thoroughly acclimatized to his natural environment through several generations. Some Americans are beginning to get it.

I read Gibbs's dispatch in the last *Chronicle* that you sent me. It certainly is good. It was the horrible cant about men thirsting to go over the top, in the first account of the fighting, that disgusted me. When I opened *Great Thoughts* it really made me swear badly for some considerable time. The interview with Lady —— was really horrible. I begin to feel more and more sure that I shall never settle down to purely sedentary or administrative or propagandist work again. I feel that the brain and the hand are both the better for being worked together, or rather alternately. It is really absurd that such a lot of physical energy should be worked off in sports when an equal amount of pleasure and more satisfaction could be obtained if brain workers got a chance of a by-occupation involving manual work. And after two years in the Army I have learnt to forgo the artificial need for cultured society which was stimulated in me by years of association with the Intelligentzia of Cambridge and London. It is good to meet a fine mind well versed in the latest thought of the world, but to be dependent for one's ordinary social needs upon an association with such minds implies, I think, an alienation from the ordinary life of mankind. Really there is nothing

narrower than a Metropolitan intellectual set. I should like to combine colonial farming with some sort of specialized sociological study and public work as the main themes of my life. I have picked up a lot about New Zealand from these fellows down the mines, and I feel it is the country for me, but it is no use counting one's chickens while this business is still on, and if one is left alive at the end one may well find oneself minus a limb or with a broken back.

I had a pleasant walk in the sunshine across the town to the baths this morning. A few nights ago, when hurrying back from the mine at midnight, I lost my way and wandered through a maze of dead, deserted streets, only coming very occasionally on a sentry, or rattling limber-wagon. I should think there has never been a deserted town like this in history. Wypers is smashed to bits as well as being deserted. Here [1] the pulverization has not gone nearly so far and the place is much bigger, but the ruins of the classic cathedral look almost Cyclopean. The fallen stones are enormous, and over a great heap of them which blocks the road a regular track has been worn by passers-by, who climb over them rather than walk three hundred yards round. I think it is wonderful of the French to have made this fresh attack after all the battering they have had at Verdun. Is there no hope that Germany will recognize the inevitable now? No one expects to crush her utterly. I suppose we shall advance at Salonica as soon as these treacherous Greeks have had their teeth drawn by demobilization, and as soon as we can finish the East African business a good part of these troops will be available for Mesopotamia or elsewhere, but the limits of possible terms of peace must be becoming clearer now to the people in power in every country. There will come a point when only journalistic cut-throats and military fanatics will want to secure infinitesimal gains through a prolongation of the slaughter, but I think, as I said before, that we should be prepared for a Treaty of Utrecht intervening.

[1] Albert.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 14 *July*, 1916.

I have just finished Fremaux's "Dernière Jours de l'Empereur," which you sent me some time ago. What a swine Hudson Lowe was and what a thousand pities Napoleon did not know when to stop! But I agree with Herbert Fisher that he certainly did not know. You could not regard his progress as a triumph in the essentials of human progress. A French tyranny might have been less brutal than a Prussian or Russian tyranny, but Voltaire reminds us what a French tyranny could be like. It is interesting to know what a favourite of Napoleon's Voltaire was. Napoleon's attitude towards religion on his death-bed is curious, and I think instructive. He feels the need of traditional ceremonial forms, but obviously he is not in any sense a believer. This, I think, goes down to the root of things, and foreshadows what the world will come back to. Primitive religions were essentially ritual and not belief—ritual can unite us; speculation must divide us. We shall end up uncommonly near where the South Sea Islanders are—some few generations after the Christians have extirpated the last remnants of paganism in Polynesia. I have often been tempted to become a Freemason in the hope of finding forms which would express the essentials of religion, and which would get one away from the connection between public religion and speculation which now rules. Public religion and private religion are two entirely distinct, though indirectly connected, things; theology, philosophy, and speculation should have nothing to do with the former. There are two types of people, one of whom would find that what I call public or social religion in the end gives a greater satisfaction to their innermost spiritual needs than any private mystical or theological belief. Napoleon's final external submission to the Catholic rites shows that he was one of this sort. The other type is much less common, though the Christian Churches try to make every one conform to it, with the result that hypocrisy, superstition, and religiosity are rampant. It is the type of person who really has a gift for transcendental cults or

personal religion. If a person has not the gift of what I call private religion he should not be expected to go in for it. It should be regarded as a cult, good for some but not for all. Public religion is good for every one, and the early Christians were rightly detested for objecting to sacrifice to the Emperor, though it is unfortunate that they were persecuted for their anti-social conduct. They were on the whole the same objectionable sort of people as the conscientious objectors of to-day, including, like these, a few very good people. I regret to have to report that I was at one stage of my career uncommonly like an early Christian, but I don't think I shall ever revert.

Fritz gave us a dose of whizz-bangs and shrapnel this morning, but did no damage to any individual. It is getting dark and near the single hour during which we are free to leave our billets without being on duty. It is rather a precious hour of liberty in this hole, but monotony is better than being in the thick of the hottest fighting now. There is more good news in to-day's French paper. We seem to be steadily widening the salient which we and the French have made. The woods and fortified villages—which really means villages with deep underground dugouts—seem to be the difficult points in this advance, but I know little more than you do about how things really stand—no more, actually. I wonder if German munition production is growing in anything like the same ratio as ours. If so, God help the poor devils of infantrymen on both sides in the end!

To the Same.

B.E.F. 16 *July*, 1916.

I have been reading the *Fortnightly* you sent to-day. Dillon seems to be getting vapid, and I think it is extraordinary that no one seems to consider how we are going both to beat Germany sufficiently, and having done so, give her a chance of living a reasonable national life in the world, without being a continual nuisance to every one else. Anything like an economic boycott is obviously nonsense, though I have no Free Trade principles personally and have no objection to preserving the national character of any

particular industry, if there is a justifiable case for doing so, by State interference. But bounties are obviously far preferable to tariffs if you are going to protect. The *New Statesman's* exposure of Bonar Law's silly attempt to deal with the West African palm-oil trade was very good.

I have been looking over a map this afternoon at all the places where I have been. They would make a good long list in three French departments and in Belgium. Most men out here swear they will never set foot in the country again, but I think a good many, like myself, will if they get a chance. With all its unpleasant associations this tract of country has become a kind of second homeland for one, albeit one's home has often been no more than the waterproof sheet one carries on one's back. Last night I saw a great golden flaming moon behind the ruins at the end of the street along which I was walking. A sort of sentimental scene, I thought, to delight the soul of a German and make a very pleasant Munich lithograph. Poor old München and Wien! I have a very deep-rooted affection for them still. They did not make this war, and I think they will both be only too glad to see the Englishman back in their streets.

I received Margoliouth's "Mohammedanism" last night and have read nearly all of it to-day. It confirms what I wrote about Mohammed's views. In fact, I feel that what we are accustomed to associate with Mohammedanism probably represents Mohammed even less than what we associate with Christianity represents Christ. Margoliouth is very emphatic about the fact that the veil, the denial of souls to women, and the tenets of an extreme fatalism are none of them apparently derived from the teachings of the Prophet, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that Mohammed taught that there was a special class of feminine creatures—houris, to wit—who were to share the immortal pleasures of men, but who were not the women who shared their mortal pleasures on earth. Obviously most men, or at any rate a good many men, would prefer to have their earthly women re-endowed in Paradise with the immortal youth which the Prophet promises to the faithful male, rather than have the most perfect Paradise houris allotted

to them. I am sure that the Prophet would realize the force of this point, and until I have discovered the passage which contradicts my view I shall not believe that he taught this.

We are going up to the front-line trenches again to-morrow to the region of trench mortars and mines. I think the trenches become more distasteful each time one goes up. I certainly get more nervous, but even this is better than being in the thick of it down there, nerve-racking as it is here.

One of the things I hope to do if I survive the war is to make up in some degree for the appalling lack of science in my education I think classical education is the utmost nonsense. People with a gift for ancient languages can take them up at the age of nineteen or twenty, as Jane Harrison did. I had a very poor literary sense as a boy and the Classics did me no earthly good, though I did appreciate Roman and Greek History.

How I long for the end of all this murderous business!

To the Same.

B.E.F. 22 *July*, 1916.

I have read Pease's "History of the Fabian Society" all through to-day in the thunder of a terrific bombardment, interrupted in my absorption of the reading only by meals, by a few items of company work, and coming out to see a poor devil in my company who came past my dugout half blinded and almost speechless from shell-shock, due to the explosion of a huge trench-mortar bomb very near him. There is, of course, much personal as well as general interest in the book for me. I have led an erratic life since I left Cambridge, but there are threads of continuity in it, and it is continuity which I find myself seeking more and more in life, and that has brought me gradually more and more back to Colchester with its old associations. It is the only bit of England that I really can look on as home. Pease has taken me back to the world of peace-time, its varied interests and all the rich stream of life. Whether I am to enjoy it again or not is on the knees of the gods. I can face death, though not the circumstances of death,

out here with equanimity, but the deep longing for the normal things of life is strong in me to-day. When I think of the millions of fighting men who feel in all their various ways the same longing as I do, it seems inconceivable that war will ever occur again; but how soon mankind forgets!

I heard a couple of days ago that Lloyd has been lucky enough to be wounded slightly. The gold braid for the wounded is not at all popular out here, where everyone regards any wound, except a serious one, as a stroke of luck. What would have been popular is a trench medal, distinguishing the men who have been under fire, for say a hundred days, from the Staff job men.

To Edward R. Pease.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.
27 July, 1916.

I have read your book "History of the Fabian Society" with great interest—in a dugout under the chalk amidst the rumble of big bombardments a few miles away and the occasional crash of unpleasant things near by. It has touched my conscience about my subscription to the Fabian Society. Frankly, my interest in the Society lapsed in recent years mainly because it seemed dominated by the Guild Socialist and feminist elements, to which I had an antipathy more personal than as a matter of principle. My views are much the same in fundamentals as they have been for the last ten years, except that I am prepared openly to support and work with the Liberal Party in particular circumstances. I send you a subscription of 30 francs, which you can change at any P.O., I believe. I should like to have the last dozen numbers of *Fabian News* to bring me into touch with recent doings of the Society.

About the only point where I disagree with you in your book is on the compensation question. I do think your footnote is a quibble, and I think you contradict yourself elsewhere. But it is a minor matter.

I don't know what I shall do with myself after the war; but I shall always remain a Fabian or something like it in political outlook. Of that I feel tolerably certain. I am about as fed-up as I can be—over fourteen months out here

now. Churchill's speeches are very good. He criticizes in exactly the right way and selects the points which most need emphasizing.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 28 *July*, 1916.

We have marched five miles from the trenches this evening, and are billeted in a sugar factory. It is the first time I have walked along a country road by daylight for months. It has been a delightful summer day, and in spite of the heavy packs and rather sore feet, owing to my being badly tranchéed, I enjoyed the walk. The country is delightful just here, though for most of the way one side of the road was barred by rope welting ten feet high to prevent observation.

Your large parcel of socks arrived last night. Please thank whoever has helped you with them. They will be invaluable for my men on our march. Of course I have not the remotest idea where we are going and don't worry much about it—Kismet. I think after a certain stage of fed-upness one does cease to worry. I have been again reading a good deal of the agriculture book. But I can't tackle "Mitteleuropa" just now while we are on the move. I could do with Carpenter, though, and later on the Butler book.

Churchill's speech was very good. I have just read the full report in the *Times*. His criticisms on organization are exactly what we all think out here, and George is evidently prepared to go in for them thoroughly. Well, the most satisfying reflection of all is that the "Boches" must at least be as fed-up as oneself. I am very sorry that Grey has gone to the Lords. He is a great Englishman and has the confidence of the country more, I believe, than any other man. One liked to think of him as a commoner. Shaw's repeated attacks on Grey have always seemed to me inconsistent with his generally sound outlook on things.

Good-night. We have a fairly long march to-morrow. I don't care a bit if we do go over the top. I can take my chance with the rest.

To the Same.

B.E.F. 8 *August*, 1916.

We had a good deal of marching and train journey yesterday. Slept under a bit of sacking propped up on shell boxes last night. Got a rest and a bath to-day. Feel a bit tired and fed-up mentally, keener on reading and absorbing than on thinking. Cornfields on rolling ridges surround our camp. Just now it is pretty peaceful, but the crash of a big gun near by occasionally disturbs one, and there have been some pretty devilish bombardments a few miles away.

I got the books " South America " and " Buried Alive " to-night. I had read " Buried Alive " and seen the play, but it bears skimming through again—a real vision of the kindly sensibleness of the English people. Alice is delicious. What a real grasp of life ! Have read some of the agriculture book with much pleasure. I used to take the ordinary democratic, bureaucratic view against technical education, but I am not sure that the best way of imparting science for the great mass of people is not in connection with its applications. That brings it nearer life, and after all the whole difference between knowledge and mere information lies in the completeness of their absorption in the daily mental life of the learner.

Mrs. Besant is illuminating on India, but I suspect her facts all through. She has all the vices of the propagandist mind—that is no doubt why she is a Theosophist, and made such ridiculous prophecies in Fabian Essays. I distrust these people who formulate too easily. I have just heard that the man I enlisted with was killed a fortnight ago. He took a commission a month after he enlisted along with us six Oxford and Cambridge men. At least one other of them was killed some months ago. One seems uncommonly near the dead nowadays in the course of our tight-rope dance, in which a certain proportion are always falling over into the abyss. I think I grow more and more desirous of life, but obviously dying cannot be very difficult or dreadful—so many people manage to accomplish it. How I long for home again ! But peace seems too good to be ever going to be true.

To Mrs. Townshend.

12 *August*, 1916.

. . . Thank you very much for the Carpenter book. I enjoyed it immensely. Read it in an awful heat, lying under a bit of sacking, in less than twenty-four hours. I have always felt I understood Carpenter pretty thoroughly, and he has influenced me much.

F. is damned lucky, but I do think it is wrong that people like him should not take their turn at the Front. The strain falls too much on the war-worn soldier.

To Mrs. Green.

B.E.F. 14 *August*, 1916.

A chance to get off a letter to-day. Thank you very much for letters and parcel received. I got a good sleep in an old German dugout last night, but the night before was half in and half out of a hole in the chalk at the side of the trench. You might always put a candle in parcels. Sometimes they are plentiful and we can buy them easily, but when one wants them most they seem to be scarcest.

Don't be surprised if you don't hear from me for some days, though I will try to send field postcards. I will leave one ready written for each day with my Q.M.S., who will probably get to hear each night if I am all right. But even this arrangement easily may go wrong.

I have been pretty busy of late and also rather tired till to-day, as we have had parades at 3.30 a.m. on two successive days. But we have had good chances of bathing which has been pleasant in the heat.

I am rather sick at Trinity's treatment of Bertie Russell. As far as I can see the facts, I do not understand why the Quakers should have a vested interest in tolerance.

I can't help feeling rather disturbed at the return to power of these pro-German reactionaries in Russia. I don't understand the forces really at work there, only I am sure that Stephen Graham's accounts of the peasants and Russian religion are all nonsense.

Flies are a bit bad here and have begun to get a taste of

the familiar smell of dead men again. But have nothing very bad as yet.

What a blessed and comforting doctrine the idea of fate is! It does somehow enter into the soul of the soldier. I see no one around worrying about going into battle.

Well, good-bye. Peaceful Colchester seems in another world now.

To Mrs. Townshend.[1]

12 *August*, 1916.

I may be knocked out in the next few days. If so, this is just a last line to you, dear. I don't anticipate death, but it is all bloody chance out here.

If there is any sort of survival of consciousness, death can hardly fail to be interesting, and if there is anything doing on the other side, I will stir something up.

Nirvana be damned! Love from Ben.

[1] This letter was the intimation I received of his death, which took place on the 18th August, 1916.—E. T.

APPENDIX I

LETTERS FROM OFFICERS OF THE D.C.L.I. WITH REFERENCE TO KEELING'S DEATH

DEAR MADAM,

Lieutenant Barrington-Ward has handed to me your letter and cuttings of the local papers' reference to Sergeant-Major Keeling. Seeing that you were one of his oldest friends, I should like to tell you how every officer and man in the battalion felt his loss. Perhaps his two years in the Army were the happiest and most useful that he spent. From the moment he joined with two thousand or more other men, his influence and brilliance were felt throughout the battalion. He was an immense factor for good among the non-commissioned ranks, and a link between officers and them. I three times asked him to take a commission, but he always replied he thought he was doing more useful work where he was. I have no hesitation in saying he was one of the bravest men I have ever seen, and he died leading a desperate bombing attack at a most critical moment.

You will find a memoir of him in the coming edition of the *Red Feather*,[1] and a poem by Barrington-Ward which he will send you.

If Keeling's diary is ever published, I hope whoever edits it will put in the tribute we have paid him in the *Red Feather*.

He was an awful loss to the battalion and me.

With sincere sympathy,

I am,

Yours very truly,

T. R. STOKOE,

Lt.-Colonel, 6th D.C.L.I.

[1] The publication of this issue was stopped, and the transmission of the material for it prevented, by the Censor.

6TH D.C.L.I., B.E.F.,
30 *August*, 1916.

You will, I expect, have learnt by this time that Keeling has been killed in action. All of us in the regiment are most awfully distressed about it. Though many good fellows went on the day of the battle (18 August), none left behind him more widespread regrets.

He was killed out along a German trench up which our bombers were working. I understand that there was a risk of our bombers bombing our own men in this trench. Keeling jumped up on the parapet to make sure that the Germans were ahead, and he was caught by a bullet and died at once. The officer with the party took his papers off him.

It is a very sad business. He did magnificently in the fight, and the party he was leading did particularly valiant work, protecting at a ticklish moment our own flank and the flank of the battalion on our right. We were unable to hold, at the time, the position we had taken, and the vigorous bombing offensive which Keeling's party undertook saved us and ensured the success of the battalion on our right.

I need not expound Keeling's merits to you. I think, however, you may be interested to know how he was appreciated as a soldier by the rest of us.

He was always a great disciplinarian and certainly began as a somewhat unpopular N.C.O. His keenness and efficiency and military attention to detail did not conciliate the enemies he had at first—enemies because as a (forgive the word) "gentleman"-soldier he was suspect, suspect also because he knew German! This was in the earliest days. As time wore on Keeling's extraordinary kindness to the men (coupled often with most horrific language!) and his unfailing energy in securing their comfort and seeing that they got their due, also his keenness on the regiment and everything regimental—sports cross-country, etc.—gave him a very different place in the eyes of the men. It was thanks to Keeling and this strong regimental spirit that the *Red Feather*—our best regimental effort—had such a great and continued success. He became an institution and (I am not exaggerating) a regular pillar of the battalion, whose absence at any time was strongly noticeable. This is a rare thing to say of any one in a battalion. We shall be hard put to it to rearrange ourselves without him.

He became sergeant-major of the Grenadier Company—a fifth and officially unrecognized organization which drew, as such

things always will, a good deal of enmity from the four "established" companies, and needed, in consequence, extra energy and watchfulness in administration. Keeling was always anxious to have his bombers thus separate in the interests of their efficiency, and he undertook to make a success of it. This he most certainly did. He was always a shield and buckler to "the bombers" in real or fancied slights and injustices, indefatigable in looking after them and in seeing that he got the right men. As a consequence he had them all in the hollow of his hand. The pains he took reaped for us a rich result in the splendid way the bombers fought the other day—Sergeant-Major Keeling at their head.

All of us who knew him—and that includes all the brigade and a large part, in fact, of the Division—keenly hoped he might come through all right. I like to think at all events that he was killed well ahead of the line out in the enemy trenches and among his own men. I feel sure he would have wished for no other end.

The *Red Feather* is especially closely connected with Keeling. He and I were projecting another number shortly, and I should like to complete one in a week or two.

The magazine becomes two things now—a history of the doings and the moods of the regiment, and now, in addition, a memorial to one of the most remarkable men in the Army.

Yours sincerely,

(*Signed*) R. BARRINGTON-WARD,
Captain.

APPENDIX II

FREDERIC KEELING AS A STUDENT OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

By ARTHUR GREENWOOD

It was our common interest in social problems that first brought me into contact with Keeling, and to that side of his life I shall confine my attention in this brief and quite inadequate sketch of his work. When he left Cambridge he went to live in South London, where he threw himself with characteristic thoroughness and enthusiasm into social work of various kinds, among others that of organizing meals for school-children. This was the beginning of his special interest in juvenile labour.

On the passage of the Labour Exchanges Act, he became secretary of a Board of Trade Committee which drafted the rules and organization of the Exchanges. When they were inaugurated Mr. Winston Churchill offered him a post as Labour Exchange Manager. His youth was against his appointment as a Divisional Officer, but Mr. Churchill allowed him to choose his Exchange. Keeling, who had up to that time no knowledge of the industrial North, decided to come to Leeds. The choice was more or less accidental. He had never seen the city; he knew nothing about it, except that it was a large manufacturing town, offering opportunities for a close study of industrial problems. In the meantime, he had written a small volume on "The Labour Exchange in relation to Boy and Girl Labour," [1] dedicated to his friend Ashley Dukes. It bears many marks of Keeling's individuality. In the Preface he complains of the incomplete character of the library of the Board of Education. He always wanted to read literally everything that had been published bearing on the subject he happened to be studying. "Local Authorities," he wrote, "do not respond to the appeals of the Board [of Education] to forward copies of all their printed matter. It seems more desirable in the interest of the study of educational administration that some sort of compulsory

[1] P. S. King and Son, 1910, 6d. net.

powers should be conferred upon the Central Authority in this matter." These sentences are characteristic of his interests and point of view at this time. Administrative problems attracted him very strongly, and when afterwards we devised social reforms we always considered the problem of administration as an integral part of our schemes. The volume on Juvenile Labour Exchanges, small though it is, represented a large amount of work, as is clear from the footnotes. During the first period of his residence in Leeds he was absorbed in the working of a new institution. Its problems fascinated him; and he gave his mind, not only to running his own Exchange, but to the larger questions of divisional administration—the Divisional Office at that time being in Leeds.

On coming to Leeds, he put himself in touch with me at the suggestion of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb. For some time he lived in two or three rooms on the top floor of the building in which the Labour Exchange was housed. The furnishings were of the simplest and the floors uncovered. I well remember that we first met in these rooms, where he had invited me to lunch off " doggers "—the hard biscuits he was fond of—walnuts, and tea made from water which had been warmed but never boiled. We talked about the Labour Exchanges and juvenile labour, and became friends from the first. From that time onward, so long as he remained in Leeds, we were in daily touch, working together on the problems in which we were both interested. He later left his rooms above the Exchange, and took a house on the outskirts of Leeds, in order, he said, to be near me. He lived but a few minutes' walk away; and when he was seized with a new idea, or had discovered a new source of information, or had a problem to discuss, he would tear across, leaving the door of his house, in which he lived alone, wide open, regardless of weather or the time. Though his rooms were invariably in a state of confusion, he was methodical in his work. Before beginning work on any particular problem, we used to prepare an elaborate outline—which I often thought to be unnecessary, as frequently we had to depart from it—and he insisted on our notes being prepared on a common plan. He was a born researcher, with a passion for thoroughness and accuracy, a great power of handling large masses of information, and an unerring instinct for essentials.

At times Keeling found his position as a civil servant somewhat irksome. He occasionally contributed anonymously to such papers as the *Crusade*, and wrote regularly on juvenile labour questions for the *School Child* under the *nom de plume*

" Accelerans." He always enjoyed this part of his work, which he took very seriously, in spite of the fact that the paper was not widely known. There was always a strong desire to do something more ambitious, and very early during our friendship we had, with all the light-heartedness of youth, decided on a great work on adolescence, which, as might perhaps be expected, was never written. We made masses of notes, from books, pamphlets, articles and official publications. We concerned ourselves with practical problems and evolved a scheme of schools for unemployed juveniles, outlined in a small volume which I wrote,[1] and also dealt with in a paper I read at the National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution in London in 1911.[2] Later Keeling elaborated a method of dealing with " blind-alley " labour which is worth mention. " The State should schedule the well-known blind-alley occupations and processes, just as we schedule dangerous trades under the Factory Act. In every urban district a Juvenile Labour Authority should be established. . . . There would be no attempt to prohibit blind-alley occupations. But if an employer wanted to engage a boy as an errand-boy or as a doffer, he would have to engage him from the Corps or Guild of boys organized by the Local Juvenile Labour Authority, just as, if you want a boy to take a message for you in London, you apply to the District Messenger Company. Boys engaged in the scheduled trades would receive wages continually, whether working or not, from the Commission Authority. They would be, in fact, hired out by the Commission at rates which would be high enough to provide a continuous remuneration for the whole Corps. Part-time education would have a natural place in the scheme, and every boy would, as a matter of course, be sent to a holiday camp in the country for a fortnight in the summer. There would be nothing to prevent an employer from selecting and keeping a particular boy if he chose to do so, provided that he would have to be content with a substitute while his regular boy was attending continuation classes. The cost of accommodation for continuation classes would be minimized by arranging that a certain proportion of the workers should always be at school, and the provision of teachers would thus be simplified. The Corps would supply boys for casual as well as permanent jobs. It could easily take over the part-

[1] " Juvenile Labour Exchanges and After Care " (King and Son, 1911, 1s. net, pp. 95–8).

[2] Report of National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution (P. S. King and Son, 1911, pp. 281 ff.).

time work now performed out of school hours by school-children. Whatever views we may have as to the Boy Scouts, we could at least take a few hints from their methods of organization and of appealing to boys' instincts. The outdoor boy-workers might wear some sort of distinctive uniform (though I tremble here lest I should be accused of leanings towards the servile State). The officers of the Corps or Guild would be chosen for their power of dealing with boys. On leaving school the boy would be attached to a company in a Corps, under a particular officer, who would be responsible for all matters of discipline, for organized games, for conducting summer camps, and so forth. At the age of eighteen or so the boy would leave the Corps for a definite situation. All the numerous public services, which are recruited largely from adult labour, would naturally draw their recruits from the publicly organized industrial army of boy-workers. And those youths who could not be placed in situations of absolutely assured permanency would, at any rate, be better equipped for the chances of life than the overgrown errand-boy, or the superfluous little piecer or van-boy." [1]

Keeling became much interested in the history and work of the certifying factory surgeons. Although the question is one arising out of the study of juvenile labour, I have forgotten exactly why it was that for a time his interest in this overshadowed his interest in other aspects of the juvenile problem, but I remember that his enthusiasm infected me. The paper "The Medical Supervision of Juvenile Workers" read by me at the National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution [2] in 1912, was the first outcome in this direction. Keeling, who investigated the whole problem with great thoroughness, intended to publish a book on it, and got a considerable way with the arrangement of his materials and the actual writing of it. The book was never published. In his "Child Labour in the United Kingdom" there is a footnote to the effect that "a work by F. Keeling on the history and present position of medical inspection of employed children and juveniles will be published shortly." [3] Before he had finished this inquiry other interests

[1] "The Present Position of the Juvenile Labour Problem," by Frederic Keeling. Read at a Conference at Bradford on 14 March, 1914; published by the North-Western District of the Workers' Educational Association. This paper is packed with fact and thought; it contains both tables and charts illustrating points made in the paper.

[2] Pp. 245–53.

[3] P. xii.

were absorbing his mind, though but for the war I have no doubt that the book would have been completed. It is probable that his manuscript and notes are now lost, but if they still exist I hope some day to be able to complete his study of the subject for publication. Though Keeling possessed administrative ability of a very high order, his temperament unfitted him for official life. It cramped and irritated him after a time, and he determined to resign. He was glad to become a free-lance again, though the restrictions of official responsibility were not the only reasons for his resignation. He wanted more leisure for his studies than his Labour Exchange work allowed him. But though he breathed a sigh of relief on regaining his freedom, he never regretted the time he spent as a Government official. He valued highly the administrative experience it gave and the peculiar vantage-ground it offered for the study of industrial problems. He left Yorkshire for London, there to begin a new period of intense activity—the chief fruits of which was his "Child Labour in the United Kingdom." [1]

Keeling had joined the International Association for Labour Legislation in 1911, and attended its Biennial Conference at Zurich in September, 1912, as one of the delegates of the British Section, serving on the "Commission" which had under discussion the insurance of foreign workmen, child labour, and the administration of Labour laws. The Conference adopted a resolution of this "Commission" requesting the various national sections to appoint special committees in their respective countries to investigate and report on the question of child labour and the best method of enforcing and extending the existing laws for the protection of children to a Special International Commission appointed to discuss the whole question. Accordingly, in October, 1912, the Committee of the British Section appointed a Sub-committee to prepare a report. The Sub-committee consisted of Keeling as chairman, Lord Henry Bentinck, M.P., Miss Constance Smith, Miss Mary Phillips, and Miss Sophie Sanger. Keeling drafted the report,[2] and the part

[1] "Child Labour in the United Kingdom: A Study of the Development and Administration of the Law Relating to the Employment of Children," by Frederic Keeling, M.A., late scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge; formerly Manager and Senior Organizing Officer on the Board of Trade Labour Exchanges (P. S. King and Son, 1914, 7s. 6d. net).

[2] In 1913 the Special International Commission on Child Labour met in Basle, and part of the proofs of the book were submitted

he played in its preparation is sufficiently indicated by the fact that his name appears on the title-page as its author. Miss Sanger refers to him as " the leading spirit " of the Committee. He brought his wide knowledge to bear on the question and put an enormous amount of effort and enthusiasm into the work. It is pretty certain that no other national section of the Association has presented so elaborate and complete a report. Keeling was always thorough, and the volume on child labour shows it. Those who helped in its preparation know that he never counted any trouble too much in his search for information. He always worked with great vigour and considerable speed, and his letters to me at this time indicate that he " sweated like hell "—to use his own expressive phrase—over the inquiry. The book consists largely of tables, statistics, detailed reports of local administration of the Employment of Children Act and kindred laws, and a reprint of the laws themselves, but the historical and analytical sections are the most interesting. The former is a piece of research; the latter is a masterly study of the administration of children's employment laws.

Juvenile labour was, however, not the only side of the social problem which interested Keeling. He visited factories, workshops, and mills in Yorkshire, and familiarized himself with industrial processes and conditions. In the West Riding of Yorkshire he studied with the deliberateness and patience of the investigator the industrial system at work. It fascinated him ; previous to his coming to the North he had never come in close contact with the industrial world, and his round of visits to workplaces was in the nature of a voyage of discovery He mastered the intricacies of the woollen and worsted, engineering, boot and shoe and other industries. Industrial organization interested him immensely, and we talked more than once of a book dealing with industrial administration. But Keeling had more than an academic interest in industry. He was interested in the workers, their conditions, wages and hours, their lives outside the factory, their organizations,[1] and their problems.

for discussion. Keeling did not attend this meeting. He had, however, been appointed to attend the next Biennial Conference, which should have taken place in September, 1914.

[1] He attended many meetings of trade-union branches and Trades Councils. It was typical of him that he described the sergeants' mess of which he was a member as like " a good Trades Council." This he regarded as complimentary to both.

He had many opportunities of coming into close touch with working-class life, and he had many friends amongst the trade unionists of Yorkshire. At one time Keeling gave a good deal of thought to wages questions, but, so far as I remember, he never wrote on the subject. The problems of unemployment and casual labour, however, claimed his attention much more. Both were barriers to the permanent improvement in the position of the workers. What added interest to these questions was the administrative problems to which they give rise. After he left the Labour Exchanges he went to Germany and, *inter alia*, studied the treatment of casual labour at the Hamburg Docks. The results of his inquiry he published in the *Economic Journal*.[1] He was a member of the International Association against Unemployment, and attended a Conference at Zurich shortly before the meeting of the International Association on Labour Legislation to which I have already referred. He spoke at the Conference in criticism of certain schemes for dealing with unemployment. He wrote a supplement to the *Crusade*[2] for January, 1913, on "The Unemployment Problem in 1913." He spent a good deal of time on this, as he contemplated writing a book on Unemployment for the Social Workers' Series, edited by his friend William Foss. The volume was announced in Mr. Lloyd's "Trade Unionism" in the same series, but, so far as I am aware, Keeling never got beyond the preparation of his materials. He had on his hands the book on Certifying Factory Surgeons, and then the inquiry into "Child Labour in the United Kingdom" came along before the former was written. Had it not been for the war, I think he would certainly have published a volume on unemployment, for he hated to begin a job which he could not complete.

In the meantime, and before he left the Labour Exchanges Department, we began to consider the question of Labour laws more scientifically than had been done previously. This led Keeling into a close study of the whole range of industrial laws. He had in mind an ambitious work on the history and principles of industrial regulation. The only fruits of this study was a lecture which Keeling delivered at Leeds University to its University tutorial class students, and a course of six lectures

[1] *Economic Journal*, March, 1913, "The Casual Labour Problem."

[2] The monthly organ of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution. He contributed several short unsigned articles to this paper on Juvenile Labour questions, etc.

which I delivered at Balliol College, Oxford, in August, 1914, to the Summer School of tutorial class students. At the request of the students I promised to republish the lectures as an Introduction to the history and principles of industrial regulation, as the larger projected work would certainly not have appeared for a considerable time. The outbreak of war, however, put an end to the smaller scheme, and with the death of Keeling the larger scheme vanished, at any rate for a very long time. When Keeling died we lost the man who knew more about the theory and principles of industrial regulation than any one else, probably, in the world.

When I saw him on his last leave—about three months before he was killed—a change had come over him. It was not that he had lost interest in the old problems. He was intensely interested in life, and he had had new experiences which put his varied interests in a new perspective. I remember being amused at the time by his paternal attitude towards some of the younger students of social problems. "When we went in for these things," he said, "we did it properly." I fear he misjudged the new school, perhaps because in some ways he had become less "advanced" in his views during the war. He talked of coming to stay with me for a month when he left the Army, in order to finish his reading for the Bar, after which—though his personal plans were always subject to sudden and violent upheaval—he intended to go to New Zealand and practise law, with a view to politics.[1]

This was not the only plan for the future he told me of. He was, indeed, full of plans. But none was to be realized. What was lost by his death to the causes for which he cared will only be realized by those who had learnt to value in him the union of the tireless curiosity and attention to detail of the scientific student and the tireless energy of the propagandist with which, when he had reached conclusions, he threw them into a scheme and expounded and defended them.

I say nothing of his character and human qualities—with this side of him I am not concerned. He was a great man in the making. When he died he had not reached the height of his powers. All his work up to the time he entered the Army was but the promise of greater accomplishments. Those who knew him do not need to be told of his intellectual ability. He had most of the qualities of both the scholar and the administrator. And though there are some who might be inclined to

[1] At one time he had thought of entering Parliament at home.

think otherwise, he was strongly self-disciplined. Few people work as intensely and whole-heartedly as Keeling did, and though there may be many who work more rapidly, there are none who worked more thoroughly than he did. He never put pen to paper until he was absolutely sure of his facts. He had infinite patience, so far as his researches were concerned, and though we often spun Utopias, his studies were always severely practical. Had Keeling survived the war, there is no doubt whatever that the world would have been enriched by the fruits of his fertile mind, his intimate knowledge of social and economic problems, and his passion for truth.

When I say that he should be regarded as one of the first six men of his generation, I am repeating what I said many times during his lifetime. And looking back on those few years of intense effort, I remember the long and intimate discussions we had, with half-conceived ideas and plans floating through them, and the tragedy of his death comes home with terrific force.

When Keeling died, the British Commonwealth (as he preferred to call it) lost one of its worthiest citizens. Though in the old days he was a State Socialist, yet his complex personality cherished liberty as its chief possession. No man had a stronger passion for liberty than he. "This crushing German trade agitation is disgusting," he wrote to me in April, 1916. "I took up a —— rifle to fight for human liberty, not for one set of —— hucksterers against another." Human liberty—that was the real motive behind all his work, and eventually he died for it.

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